nothin' but 'ligion: The American Missionary Association's Activities in the Nation's Capital, 1852 – 1875

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ABSTRACT

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Missionary zeal in Washington, D.C. was at its height during the two decades following the opening of the Civil War. Religious organizations and their affiliates descended upon the city as its black population swelled from 10,983 in 1860 to 48,377 in 1880 – one of the largest urban black populations in the United States. Ten years after the first missionaries of the American Missionary Association (AMA) began evangelizing in the District of Columbia, AMA teachers initiated the instruction of contraband, freedmen, and free blacks in the fundamentals of education. The mission was to retool and prepare blacks in the transition from slavery to freedom. Given the numerous milestones in understanding missionary work (labor) in the rural south, little has been said about missionary activities in urban/metropolitan south by historians whose foci has been the deep south, aspects of missionary duties, and notable personnel. This study focuses on one missionary organization that significantly contributed to the urbanization of blacks in Washington, D.C. – to determine the outcome of its work in the life of free men and women in the city and to understand the origins of its historical legitimacy and legacy.

At the center of this study were more than five thousand American Missionary Association (AMA) digital frames of papers which provide a clear understanding of what took place during this critical period. From such papers, personnel, ideas, and occurrences can be

closely followed to reconfigure the organization's past. Additionally, records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands provided a more concise view of the AMA's effects on the black community of Washington. Combined with more traditional sources, those materials have broadened the way to a better understanding of the nature of the black experience and the factors which shaped that urban experience in Washington, D.C. after the Civil War.

The enormity of the challenge was so great that a few missions and mission workers folded soon after they began – leaving those who most needed to be rescued to fend for themselves. For most missionaries, the call to mission work had a deeper meaning that was displayed in the inner sanctum of the organization's relief - in their efforts to normalize the lives of the freedmen and freemen with traditional institutions such as the schools, churches, and work.

The inability of the AMA's mission work among the black community in Washington to make greater social, economic, and religious strides by the end of the Reconstruction Era, is tied to the uniqueness of Washington, D.C. and the organization; the shear size of the migration and nature of the city left an overwhelming void that was impossible to fulfill. Ultimately, it was those who were first responders that failed to provide comprehensive aid in the transition from slavery to freedom – to bring a permanent program that lifted blacks in Washington out of lower class bondage. The combination of staffing issues, poor administration, high mindedness, a burgeoning missionary field, and Republican influence did not allow the American Missionary Association to commit fully to lasting change among Washington, D.C.'s black population. Thus

upon the exodus of missionaries and benevolent associations, those who made it to the "promised land" were left with nothin' but 'ligion.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"*What is past is prologue*." William Shakespeare

The idea for this project began when I was a graduate student at Howard University working on my thesis about black Baptist ministers during Reconstruction Era in Washington, D.C. While my work on Washington, DC was primarily focused on a collective of black Baptist ministers during the Reconstruction Era, it served as a precursor to understanding the Freemen's Aide Movement and the foundational work of predecessors who toiled mightily to improve the conditions of newly freed slaves during this period. This dissertation is the evolution of the idea that the American Missionary Association in Washington, D.C. systematically attempted to transform the lives of black people during the Reconstruction Era. Attached to this benevolent organization were workers who were concerned about the fate of a people whose economic, spiritual, and educational destinies were left in a precarious state after the institutional end of slavery. This dissertation documents one organization's attempt to be the change agent black people wanted to see.

This document would not have been possible without the meticulous documentation of the American Missionary Association. Primary source documents from the AMA helped to illuminate the history of the transformation of place and people during one of the most critical times in American history. To this end, I thank Kelly Miles and Elizabeth Greenlee who assisted me with the transcription of these documents which, at times, was a herculean task. Tremendous gratitude is given to Michael Knight who helped me wade through box after box

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Dedication:

To my three sons, Herbert H. Toler, III, Lawrence King Toler, and Jacob Lawrence King Toler, let not any man, group, institution, or principality tell you it cannot be done.

And

To the many family, friends, and scholars who prayed me through, crossed the Jordan River, and never saw this dissertation to completion.

And

To all who made it to freedom, but never realized they were free.

One God, One Aim, One Destiny

Chapter 1
Introduction: A Historiography

The Brooklyn Heights preacher had a flair for the dramatic. He maintained a deep-seeded hatred for slavery and was one of the nineteenth century's most ardent and outspoken abolitionists. Slavery to him was an evil institution condemned by both God's law and the Declaration of Independence. How best could he expose the evil than through drama that would paint the truth as clearly as possible and make people a part of the tragedy rather than casual observers? Those who were enslaved needed empathy and there was no better way to garner such emotion than to hold a mock-slave auction in the church.

One Sunday morning in 1860, as the service neared the postlude conclusion, the venerable Henry Ward Beecher, pastor of Plymouth Church, halted the processional and began telling the heart-wrenching story of a nine-year-old girl named "Pinky" who was being sold by a Virginian doctor who was most likely her father. He had already traded her mother and sisters, but her grandmother's mournful pleas, prayers, and petitions to the church regarding her granddaughter's impending auction, were heard by the pastor.

Once again, as they had done before when presented with the purchase of an enslaved girl named Sarah, the congregation responded overwhelmingly when Beecher welcomed the child into the pulpit. A collection for her freedom was begun. Once the collection boxes were full, Beecher pulled from the box a ring given by the author Rose Terry and slipped it onto the little girl's pinky finger. Like a loving grandfather he spoke softly to her. The congregation quieted to listen. "Now remember that this is your freedom-ring." The congregation erupted in tearful thanks. "Pinky", as the child became affectionately known, not only received her

freedom, but she went on to complete her education and eventually became an educator of other black people.

Sixty-seven years after her freedom was bought in the mock-slave auction (long after Henry Beecher's death) Pinky returned to Plymouth Church. She was seventy. Her name was now Rose Ward Hunt (taken from the combination of Henry Ward Beecher's middle name and Rose Terry). She was attending Plymouth's eighty-year celebration and her gift was to give back the freedom ring in honor of Beecher. Pinky's story was a testimony to the power of a single individual to motivate thousands of others toward social change.

The historical record is unclear regarding the education of Pinky. However, the American Missionary Association's (AMA) superintendent of schools in Washington, D.C. revealed in 1868 that Rose Ward, then fifteen years of age, was under the charge of its most studious and ambitious people. He commented that she had escaped the contaminations of the wicked city and had the makings of an honest, intelligent, and productive woman who would fulfill her usefulness as a teacher. The missionary expressed hope "that she may be reserved to act well some part in great movements of the future." What he did not realize was that she had already been a part of one of the greatest theodicies in American history.[1]

The abolition of slavery in Washington, D.C. in 1862 marked, among other things, a new chapter in the relationship between church and state. The District of Columbia became a

[1]Halford R. Ryan, *Henry Ward Beecher: Peripatetic Preacher* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 37-38; Debby Appleby*, The Most Famous Man in America: Biography of Henry Ward Beecher* (New York: Random House, 2006), 316-316, 470; W.S. Tilden to Whipple, February 12, 1866, (16763) American Missionary Association Archives, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana hereafter noted as AMAA.

proving ground for freedom, migration, education, enfranchisement, and labor and featured the collaboration between benevolent societies and the federal government, including, from 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau. Slavery's demise in the District prompted a New England Quaker to write "the end of slavery in Washington should spur Christians to strive for universal emancipation."[2]

The emancipation of 3,100 slaves in the District of Columbia was a harbinger of expanded mutual aid activity in reconstructing the national capital. The end of the Civil War and ratification of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments gave rise to an invigorated benevolent impulse to reconfigure the sacred and social relationships of the capital city. The education of the masses - the locus of change -- was one of the most significant movements of the era. As freedom expressed itself in the religiosity of the South, new social relationships between the races were forged. Many of the interracial, biracial, and ecumenical relationships of the antebellum period were no longer viable.

Washington D.C. was one of the largest southern religious communities during the Reconstruction period. It serves as an excellent site to examine religious activities at a time of wrenching social change. One of the first cities to experience a large scale rural-urban migration in the post-Civil War era, Washington, D.C. had been a city of 75,080 residents with 11,131 free blacks and 3,185 slaves in 1860. Between 1860 and 1880 Washington's black

[2]Victor B. Howard, *Religion and the Radical Republican Movement, 1860-1870* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 28.

population eclipsed American cities of comparable size growing from 10,983 to 48,377 and from 18 to 32.5 percent of the city's total.

Focusing on the period between 1852 and 1875, this study examines the activities of the AMA that took place in the freedmen's transition to freedom and particularly the opening and maintaining of free schools in the District of Columbia, a major urban center in the upper South. It argues that the AMA settled in the District of Columbia in order to showcase its missionary ability, to define the meaning of freedom through schooling, and collaborate with the Freedmen's Bureau which held the largess of freedmen's aid.

Given the frenetic level of growth and activity, it is no surprise that benevolent societies were drawn to the District of Columbia. The outreach was geared to providing the best and most efficient services in the rapidly growing urban center – clothing, medical, schooling, religious, employment, and social services; such a program was atypical for rural areas, though 80 percent of blacks lived outside towns during this period. The mission of the organization was no different than when it had begun in 1846: "to preach the gospel to the poor, assist feeble churches, sustain missionary operations amongst, the freed colored population, and preach deliverance to the crushed and stricken slave." The AMA maintained a high standard for its school system which aimed to reflect the best of New England minds and schools - at least in the large cities.

In large cities, the societies could also concentrate on school-construction projects, and make acceptable provisions for the boarding of teachers and receive mail and supplies more efficiently than in outlying areas. Moreover, it hoped to exert lasting influence over black

communities by focusing its operations in the towns. Denominational groups established churches alongside their missions. In 1868, an AMA field secretary explained, “our policy is to get a particular hold on a place by owning school premises and putting up a mission home and as soon as we can a chapel and gather a church.” The society considered the construction of large and impressive buildings a wise investment in its Southern work.

In particular, the AMA’s educational complex in Washington in 1870 was providing elementary instruction for 2000 children each year plus normal-and college - level studies for lesser numbers. In addition, the city’s burgeoning economy allowed a smaller number of teachers to reach a greater number of children due to the migration of their parents. The nation’s capital served as a hub for “contraband” relief initiated at the outset of the Civil War. One example of this was a local Freedmen’s Relief Association, which made efforts to establish care for the thousands of slaves entering the city. As their ranks swelled, many freedmen moved to “contraband” villages on the outskirts of Washington.

Focusing on the activities of the AMA as representative of northern aid societies, this study advances current scholarship that examines the role of northern benevolent organizations in rebuilding the urban South after the Civil War. This association was a darling of the Radical Republicans and collaborated with the Freedmen’s Bureau to offer relief throughout the South during the Reconstruction Era.

An examination of the AMA’s activities in relation to the formation of a black community reveals the roles free people, “contrabands”, and freedpeople played in this critical period of urban Southern history, providing a more complete understanding of each group's

view of emancipation and their role in defining freedom. Scholars have too often dismissed the attitudes and actions of freedmen's aid societies as irrational, narrow-minded, or even un-Christian. In doing so, they have failed to appreciate the powerful influences on the lives of evangelicals who were inspired by their interpretation of God's providence and a corporate plan of action issued by headquarters. With an understanding of these views, historians can reach a better conceptualization of the efforts to rebuild the urban South, be more precise in understanding the failure of Reconstruction, and grasp the true beginnings of Black Reconstruction as later described by W.E.B. DuBois.

Under the aegis of black and white benevolent organizations, former slaves defined their freedom, built institutions, and changed the politics of the city. The municipal "black codes" were repealed in 1862 and after the war, black councilmen and aldermen were elected to the city council. By 1867 Washington's black population owned one-fifth of all privately held real estate in the city. In 1880 only two cities had larger black populations than Washington. New Orleans and Baltimore's black communities witnessed steady growth, but by the end of the century they too had been surpassed by the burgeoning black population of Washington.[3]

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[3]For more insight into why abolitionists were reluctant to campaign in Washington see Melvin Roscoe Williams, "Blacks in Washington, D.C., 1860-1870," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1976), 126-127; Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 191-192; Constance Green, *The Secret City: The History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967). In 1866, Radical Republicans pushed the white citizens of Washington to extend the franchise to black males. A better understanding of this situation can be gathered from these monographs: Williams, "Blacks in Washington, D.C., 1860-1870," 136; Green, *The Secret City*, 150; John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 27, 28, 67, 68, 70, 196; C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1960), 91; James H. Whyte, *The UnCivil War: Washington During Reconstruction, 1865-1878*. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958), 37; Katherine Masur, *An Example for All the Land*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 139, 140, 158, 192.

This study uses varied sources to highlight the activities of the AMA. Uncovering the names of the relevant people, groups, and organizations is difficult, but information was gathered from existing studies, federal reports, and denominational records. Over the last three decades there has been interest in the AMA. A number of local and state studies have examined the diverse social, political, and economic circumstances in which the association operated, the diverse strategies and assumptions of its officials, superintendents, teachers, missionaries, sponsors, affiliates, and the complex interactions among association personnel (white northerners), freedpeople, and white southerners. Post-revisionist historians, writing during the 1970s and 1980s, focused on the association's limitations, miscalculations, and grand failures, pointing out it that failed to deliver the true meaning of republican freedom. More recent scholarship has more optimistically attempted to analyze abolitionist responsiveness while weighing the teachers' idealism against the narrow-mindedness of white southerners.

Additional sources of information for this study include congressional reports, personal papers, manuscripts, city directories, biographical directories, newspapers, church archives, Freedmen's Savings Bank records, and recorder of deed records. Particularly useful are the manuscript schedules of the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth United States censuses in 1860, 1870, and 1880, respectively. From this research, biographical data can be collected on the vanguard of religious leadership in Washington, D.C. during Reconstruction.[4]

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[4]Howard B. Furer, *Washington: A Chronological and Documentary History, 1790-1970* (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1975), 21-27; Letitia Woods Brown, *Free Negroes in the District of Columbia, 1790-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 11; Allan Johnston, *Surviving Freedom: The Black Community of Washington, D.C., 1860-1880* (New York: Garland Press, 1993), xxi.

Religious activity was a source of social power during this era. Numerous churches acted as charitable agencies, provided relief, money, clothing, food, literacy training, recreation, schools, and maintained cemeteries for deceased members of the community.[5] Black schools were established to challenge white opposition to freedmen's education. In many schools, Bibles provided by the New York Tract Society were used as a source of education. Reverend J. Sella Martin sent his children to white public schools despite the misgivings of the Mayor. In 1866 and 1867 when Mayor Wallach persistently refused to pay the trustees of the black schools the amount which Congress had authorized, Sayles J. Bowen, president of the Freedmen's Aid Society, advanced $20,000.00 out of his own pocket in order to enable them to continue. The Presbyterian minister and former Senate Chaplain Byron Sunderland, made the First Presbyterian Church available to the Freedmen's Relief Association. Frederick Douglass warned the audience to "not leave in the soil the same sort of root or fiber from which may spring other assassinations than that of Lincoln."[6]

This study focuses on answering several questions concerning religious activity in Washington, D.C. from the year the association entered the city (1852) to 1875, when George Whipple, the AMA's former president, was controversially elected president of Howard University over his Oberlin advisee, mentee, and AMA colleague, John Mercer Langston. The questions addressed include: (1) How active was the American Missionary Association during this period? (2) What issues were at the forefront of its activity? (3) What was the relationship

[5]Williams, "Blacks in Washington," 65.

[6] James H. Whyte, *The UnCivil War: Washington During the Reconstruction, 1865-1878* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958), 34, 53, 77.

the American Missionary Association and blacks? (4) Did the AMA and Federal Government collaborate to reconstruct the city? (5) Was the AMA the only benevolent society conducting missions during Reconstruction in Washington, D.C.? (6) Where did the AMA's work take place? (7) How far did the AMA go to define freedom for Washington's black population? (8) Who were the administrators, staff, superintendents, teachers, missionaries, religious workers, affiliates and secular supporters of the AMA's activity? (9) What was the AMA's philosophy and pedagogy for schooling blacks? (10) What accounts for the rapid growth of black independent religious activity in the city? (11) What was religion's impact on Reconstruction in the urban South? (12) Did the presence of the AMA pose a threat to the established order? (13) How and why did the AMA's religious activity end, if it did? (14) What was accomplished? Specific attention will be given to religious activity of the American Missionary Association among blacks and the Freedmen's Bureau along with members of the Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Colored Methodist Episcopal, Protestant Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Methodist Episcopal churches as well as the Society of Friends, Wayland Seminary, and the National Freedmen's Relief Association.

This study is significant because it analyzes the role of religion during a critical period in American history. No such studies have been conducted for Washington, D.C. The broader purpose of this research is to analyze the relationship between church and state in relation to the formation of community during a transitional period in the history of the United States.

Much scholarship on religion in the postwar South has neglected to examine the process of religious reconstruction in the broadest context. Too often scholars focus their attention on

Methodists and ignore the contributions of Baptists and Congregationalists. When they do consider these other groups, historians tend to view them through the eyes of their own subjects, a practice that distorts their understanding of those who had different visions and priorities. Thus, students of Southern denominations find northern Christians uncharitable and unreasonable and perceive the freedpeople as ignorant and helpless; students of black denominations see southerners as unbelievably hostile to blacks and consider northerners only marginally better in their paternalism; and students of northern denominations see their efforts as a great humanitarian effort to uplift the benign freedpeople - though they do seem to agree with some of their subjects' Southern critics that northern denominations were unreasonable in their demands for contrition over slavery and secession.

Appearing at the close of Reconstruction, Thomas Pearne's article, "The Freedmen" was the first scholarly work on the subject of religion and Reconstruction. It generally focused on white denominational relief among the freedmen but devoted little attention to Reconstruction policy.[7] Among the subsequent denominational studies and shorter works on religion and Reconstruction, there are a total of seven doctoral dissertations, seven articles, seventeen articles in academic journals, single chapters in five books, and fifteen books.[8]

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[7]Thomas H. Pearne, "The Freedmen." *Methodist Review* 59 [4th Ser., vol. 29] (July 1877): 462-481.

[8] Rev. Bowyer Stewart, *The Work of the Church in the South During the Period of Reconstruction* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Western Theological Seminary, 1913); William W. Sweet, "Methodist Church Influence in Southern Politics," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 1 (March 1915): 546-560; William W. Sweet, "Negro Church in the South: A Phase of Reconstruction," *Methodist Review* 104 (May 1921): 405-418; Mark Mohler, "The Episcopal Church and National Reconstruction, 1865," *Political Science Quarterly* 41 (December 1926): 567-595; Eugene Portlette Southall, "The Attitude of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Toward the Negro from 1844 to 1870,"

Journal of Negro History 16 (October 1931): 359-370; Lewis G. Vander Velde, *The Presbyterian Churches and the Federal Union 1861-1869* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932); William A. Russ, Jr. "The Failure to Reunite Methodism After the Civil War," *Susquehanna University Studies* 1 (1936): 8-16; Hunter Dickinson Farish, *The Circuit Rider Dismounts: A Social History of Southern Methodism 1865-1900* (Richmond, Va.: Dietz Press, 1938); Oliver S. Hickman, "Northern Church Penetration of the South, 1860-1880" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1939); Henry W. Rector, "A Reconstruction Episode: Bishop Lay and Episcopal Church Reunion, 1865," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 2 (September 1943): 193-20; Edward D. Jervey, "Motives and Methods of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Period of Reconstruction," *Methodist History* 4 (July 1944): 17-25; Ralph E. Morrow, "Northern Methodist in the South During Reconstruction," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 41 (September 1954): 197-218; Treadwell J. Davis, "Obstacles to Reunion of the Presbyterian Church. 1868-1888," *Virginia Magazine and Biography* 63 (January 1955): 28-39; Ralph E. Morrow, *Northern Methodist and Reconstruction* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1956); Charles J. Stewart, "Lincoln's Assassination and the Protestant Clergy of the North," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 54 (Autumn 1961): 268-293; Earnest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963-1973); Emory Stevens Bucke, et al. (eds.), *The History of American Methodism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964); Winthrop S. Hudson, "Reconstituting the Nation: Religion and Reconstruction," *Foundations* 8 (October 1965): 331-337; Andrew E. Murray, *Presbyterians and the Negro - A History* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1966); Burton J. Williams, "Religion and Reconstruction: A Cleric's Conception," *Methodist History* 9 (April 1971): 45-52; Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1972); Carlton J. Hayden, "After the War: The Mission and Growth of the Episcopal Church among Blacks in the South, 1865-1872," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 42 (December 1973): 403-427; Donald Franklin Roth, "'Grace Not Race': Southern Negro Church Leaders, Black Identity, and Missions to West Africa, 1865-1919" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1975); Jack P. Maddex, "From Theocracy to Spirituality: The Southern Presbyterian Reversal on Church and State" *Journal of Presbyterian History* 54 (Winter 1976): 438-457; Kenneth K. Bailey, "The Post-Civil War Racial Separations in Southern Protestantism: Another Look," *Church History* 46 (December 1977): 453-473; W. Harrison Daniel, "The Reaction of British Methodism to the Civil War and Reconstruction in America," *Methodist History* 16 (October 1977): 3-20; James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-186* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); James M. Washington, "The Origins and Emergence of Black Baptist Separatism, 1863-1897" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1979); Gilbert Anthony Williams, "The A.M.E. Christian Recorder: A Forum for the Social Ideas of Black America, 1854-1902" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1979); Joe M. Richardson, "The Failure of the American Missionary Association to Expand Congregationalism among Southern Blacks," *Southern Studies* 18 (Spring 1979): 51-73; William B. Gravely, "The Social, Political, and Religious Significance of the Formation of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (1870)," *Methodist History* 18 (1979): 3-25; W. Harrison Daniel, "English Presbyterians, Slavery and the American Crisis of the 1860s," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 58 (Spring 1980): 50-62; David O. Moore, "The Withdrawal of Blacks from Southern Baptist Churches Following Emancipation," *Baptist History and Heritage* 16 (1981): 12-18; Charles Wilson Reagan, "Robert Lewis Dabney: Religion and the Southern Holocaust," *Virginia History and Biography* 89 (January 1981): 79-89; Clarence E. Walker, *A Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1982); William B. Gravely, "James Lynch and the Black Christian Mission during Reconstruction," in *Black Apostles at Home and Abroad: Afro-Americans and the Christian Mission from the Revolution to Reconstruction*, eds. David W. Wells and Richard Newman (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1982), 161-188; Joe M. Richardson, "Labor is Rest to Me Here in This Lord's Vineyard': Hardy Mobley, Black Missionary during Reconstruction," *Southern Studies* 22 (Spring 1983): 15-20; James M.

In 1965 Winthrop S. Hudson attempted to broaden the understanding of religion and Reconstruction by analyzing the causes of the Civil War and the Northern defeat during the Reconstruction period.[9] Encouraged by Hudson's and others' theses about religious activity during the period following the Civil War, the next generation of scholars looked at the mosaic of antebellum white Christianity, slave religion (the "invisible institution"), and the chasm that grew between the two. Their landmark publications wrested interpretive control from the denominationalists and formed the foundation by which we better understand the intricacies of religion and Reconstruction.[10] Clarence E. Walker's *A Rock in a Weary Land* remains the only

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Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986); Edward L. Wheeler, *Uplifting the Race: The Black Minister in the New South 1865-1902* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986); Stephen Warder Angell, "Henry McNeal Turner and Black Religion in the South, 1865-1900" (Ph.D. dissertation Vanderbilt University, 1988); Katherine L. Dvorak, *An African-American Exodus: Segregation of the Southern Churches* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1991); Reginald F. Hildebrand, "Methodism and the Meaning of Freedom: Missions to Southern Blacks during the Era of Emancipation and Reconstruction" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1991); William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South, 1865-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1993); Reginald F. Hildebrand, *The Times Were Strange and Stirring: Methodist Preachers and the Crisis of Emancipation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); Paul Harvey, "A Wall of the Lord 'Round Me: Black Baptist Organizing in the South, 1865-1895," in *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities Among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 45-74; Paul Harvey, "Redeemed By Blood: White Baptist Organizing in the South, 1865-1895," in *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities Among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 17-44; Daniel W. Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863-1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[9] Winthrop S. Hudson, "Reconstituting the Nation: Religion and Reconstruction," *Foundations* 8 (October 1965): 331-337.

[10] John Blassingame, *Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); Donald Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); Albert Raboteau *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Milton Sernett, *Black Religion and American*

seminal work that directly discusses the historical significance the African Methodist Episcopal Church's religious activity during reconstruction.[11]

Overall, the historical field of religion and Reconstruction has had an uneven past. For some historians, Reconstruction was a denominational movement. For others, it was a social, cultural, and economic movement that further segregated the races. Historians are equally divided on whether Christian Reconstruction was completed. Some portray it as an evangelical social protest, or post-millennial preparation, while others discount Reconstruction's religious aspects, preferring to see the denominations as political pawns. Most studies contain little on the role of theology, the membership, interdenominational disputes as well as ecumenical attempts.

Denominational historians have been suspected of being apologetic hagiographers, serious historians. However, serious historians, both within and outside individual denominations, have made extensive contributions to the study of this period. Among the best

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Evangelism (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1975); For an understanding of white Protestantism in the late nineteenth century see Rufus B. Spain, *At Ease in Zion* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1961); John Lee Eighamy, *Churches and Cultural Captivity* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1972); H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, but …Racism in Southern Religion* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1972); David Reimers, *White Protestantism and the Negro* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965).

[11] Clarence E. Walker, *A Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1982).

[12]Francis B. Simkins, "New Viewpoints of Southern Reconstruction," *Journal of Southern History* 5 (February 1939): 49-61; Also see Eric Foner, "Reconstruction Revisited," *Reviews in American History* 4 (December 1982): 82-100. See also Francis B. Simkins, "White Methodist in South Carolina during Reconstruction." *North Carolina Historical Review* 5 (January 1928): 35-64.

studies that concentrate on single white denominations are those by Rufus B. Spain, John Lee Eighamy, Hunter Dickinson Farish, Ralph Morrow, Donald G. Jones, Louis C. Vander Velde, and Earnest Trice Thompson.[12]

Much of the notable recent scholarship on religion in the postwar South involves the experiences of black Americans. Clarence E. Walker's study of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church along with Stephen Ward Angells' biography of Bishop Henry M. Turner offer intriguing histories of a black denomination and one of its leading southern Bishops during the Civil War and religious reconstruction period. Katherine Divorak's insight into the separation of black and white Methodists in the aftermath of the Civil War provides new corrective analysis to older understandings. James Melvin Washington's study of black Baptist provides a groundbreaking study of the largest group of southern black Christians while William E. Montgomery's discerning fusion of the history of black churches in the last third of the nineteenth century condenses much previous scholarship and reinterprets these critical centers of the black community.[13]

To understand the field of religion and Reconstruction, one might return to Francis B. Simkins' 1939 admonition to the historical field – that while Reconstruction was "seen by white southerners as an attempt to 'Africanize' the South, the exact opposite was true. Reconstruction should be interpreted as a definite step in the Americanization of the blacks.

[12] Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 11.

[13] Ibid.; Walker, *A Rock in a Weary Land;* Stephen Warder Angell, "Henry McNeal Turner and Black Religion in the South, 1865-1900"; Katherine L. Dvorak, *An African-American Exodus*; James Melvin Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*; William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree*.

Simkins' outlined what he saw as the syncretism of African and American culture. With the sudden emergence of the black churches from invisibility, Simkins' Americanization thesis becomes significant when considering the church's preparation of "cultural capital."[14]

The complexity of the relationship between religion and Reconstruction is perhaps the main reason why so few scholars have pursued its story. The scholarship of the Civil War and Reconstruction eras, needless to say, is abundant and particularly valuable, but too few researchers have inspected the religious life of the postwar South. James M. McPherson's exceptional survey of the Civil War era, for example, does not mention religious activities, either within the armies or on the home fronts. Although he recognized their essentialness to the black experience during the Reconstruction Era, Eric Foner's discussion of black churches was minimal. He asserts that the church was "second only to the family as a focal point of black life," but he does not make the black church experience the pivot of his analysis. Furthermore, Foner as well as other scholars of this period has disregarded the religious activities of white southerners and northerners almost completely. Even W.E.B. DuBois' monumental study of this period says little about black churches or their contributions to this era.[15]

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[14]Francis B. Simkins, "New Viewpoints of Southern Reconstruction," *Journal of Southern History* 5 (February 1939): 49-61; Also see Eric Foner, "Reconstruction Revisited," *Reviews in American History* 4 (December 1982): 82-100. See also Francis B. Simkins, "White Methodist in South Carolina during Reconstruction." *North Carolina Historical Review* 5 (January 1928): 35-64.

[15] Stowell, *Rebuiding Zion*, 10-11; James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper Row Publishers, 1988); W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Antheneum, 1969).

John Boles suggests in *Masters and Slave in the House of the Lord* that "Religious historians should pay more attention to race, and historians of the black experience should examine more carefully the role of religion."[16] In her study of the exodus of blacks from southern churches between 1861 and 1871, Katherine Dvorak acknowledges the dearth of literature on the subject and states that controversy persists in understanding religion after the Civil War. She concludes that the Reconstruction's "historiographical controversy has tended to obscure the evidence."[17]

Little is therefore known about religion in the Reconstruction Era. While many scholars have avoided the role of religion, innovative perspectives on the subject have expanded in quantity and proficiency in recent years. Drew Gilpin Faust and the authors of *Why the South Lost the Civil War* provide new considerations of the role of Southern evangelicalism in both assisting and destabilizing the Confederate cause. James H. Moorhead and Phillip Shaw Paluden have put forth valuable perspectives on the actions and beliefs of northern Protestants during the Civil War era. Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., Drew G. Faust, and Reid Mitchell have given glimpses of the role of religion in the Civil War armies. During the postwar era, Charles Reagan Wilson and Gaines M. Foster have carefully studied white southerners' views of defeat and

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[16]John Boles, *Masters & Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988).

[17]Katherine L. Dvorak, *An African-American Exodus: Segregation of the Southern Churches* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1991).

their contributions to the Lost Cause movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[18]

Reginald Hildebrand, according the Daniel Stowell in *Rebuilding Zion*, has explored the denominational choices available to Methodist freedpeople in the postwar South. He concludes that these denominations represented three responses to the "crisis of emancipation." The reaction of the Methodist Episcopal Church South (MECS) and the Colored Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church was to create a new brand of paternalism. The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) charged missionaries to the South to proclaim a gospel of freedom to the freedpeople. Similarly, the Methodist Episcopal Church compelled its missionaries to proclaim strict opposition to "caste" and off the promise of racially integrated denominational organizations. Hildebrand, Stowell continues, argues that the battle among Methodism was "waged largely over different interpretations of the meaning of freedom." Race separated MECS more than paternalism united them, and race united the CME with the AMEZ churches more than class or ideology divided them. "As Hildebrand points out," Stowell writes, "even

[18] Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 11; Richard E. Baringer, et. al. *Why The South Lost the Civil War* (Athens: University of George Press, 1986); James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978); Philip Shaw Paludan, "Religion and the Civil War," in Miller, Stout, and Wilson, *Religion and the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)*;* Gardner H. Shattuck, Jr. "Appomattox as a Day of Blessing": Religious Interpretations of Confederate Defeat in the New South Era", Journal of Confederate History 7 (1991); Drew G. Faust, Christian Soldiers: The Meaning of Revivalism in the Confederate Army." Journal of Southern History 53 (February 1987): 63-90; Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: the Northern Soldier Leaves Home*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: the Religion of the lost cause 1865 – 1920*, Athens Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2009. Gaines M. Foster *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergency of the New South*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1987.have carefully explore white southerners' perceptions of defeat and their contributions to the lost cause movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Lucius Holsey, a committed champion of the new paternalism, became disillusioned late in the nineteenth century when faced with segregation and the horrors of lynching. As his older competitor, Henry M. Turner, had done years before, Holsey reluctantly became a separatist."[19]

Few have tried to relate the activities and impact of the AMA. In 1941, Henry L. Smits published an unsympathetic overview of the organization. W. E. B. Du Bois was so moved by the passion and energy of "the gift of New England" that he paid homage to the Calico-garbed "saintly souls" in his The Souls of Black Folk in 1903. To him, northern education effort represented "the finest thing in American history."[20]

Almost four decades later, historians were not so kind. Wilbur J. Cash, chronicler of white southern mythology, condemned the white female Yankee for her "meddlesome ways". Although he did agree with Du Bois in the nobility of descending into the South as the epitome of the "Yankee mind" he conjured up an image associated with the rather derogatory label "Yankee Schoolmarm."[21]

The Civil Rights era brought new perspectives during the 1960s and 1970s. James

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[19]Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 11-12; Reginald F. Hildebrand, *The Times Were Strange and Stirring: Methodist Preachers and the Crisis of Emancipation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), xviii.

[20] Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865-1873* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 5-6.

[21] Wilbur Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: A.A. Knopf), 140-141.

McPherson followed the idealistic activities of northern men and women to discover dreams of a casteless society which distinguished them from the rest of American society. Tracing those actions also revealed a cadre of antebellum abolitionists who were adamant about dedicating their lives to the cause of black education. McPherson did not want to appear naïve. He admits, "the teachers were paternalistic (or maternalistic)" but "the reformers were not racists – they believed that blacks had the same intellectual capacities as whites – and that Afro-American leaders supported their efforts to instill Puritan values in black students."[22]

Other scholars have chosen to explore the ambiguities and contradictions in freedmen's work. What were their attitudes toward race, white southerners, charity, and the Freedmen's Bureau? Sandra E. Small concluded that "the women were "unsure of their way in frequent conflicts between prevailing customs and their own perceptions of human values."[23]

Jacqueline Jones summed up her assessment of the historiography of the benevolent societies: scholars who have recently studied the issues of race and reform during Reconstruction distinguish the abolitionists' sensibility from majority public opinion at the time; the teachers' idealism presents a striking contrast to the intransigence of most Americans one

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[22]James McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964); Also see Joe M. Richardson*, Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861-1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986); Ronald E. Butchart, *Northern Schools, Sothern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862 – 1875* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980); Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller, eds., *The Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction: Reconsiderations* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999).

[23] Sandra Small, "The Yankee Schoolmarm in Freedmen's Schools: An Analysis of Attitudes," in *Journal of Southern History* 45 (1979), 402.

the race question in general, and southerners on the issue of black education in particular."[24]

The "New Religious (AMA) Reconstruction Historiography" of the last twenty years offers a more balanced interpretation that acknowledges the elements of bourgeois Yankee paternalism/republicanism of society officials even as they assisted former slaves in negotiating the transition from slavery to freedom. Much has to be considered when examining the zeitgeist of the Freedmen's Aid Societies: racism (both Northern and Southern), southerners' manipulation and eventual redemption of policies, the short-term status of the agencies, their limited resources, and the lack of focus due to the expansion into other fields.

Recent research has focused primarily on the rural South, where the great majority of freedpeople lived. There are few studies of the association in an urban area: otherwise excellent accounts of the African American experience in cities like Atlanta, Mobile, Lynchburg, Richmond, and Charleston devote only a few pages to the manifestation of urban life activities. Despite the focus on the rural operations of the AMA, there is much to be gained from detailed analysis of its operations in an urban setting.

One of the principal themes of the New Religious Reconstruction Historiography is the agency's attempt to apply northern free-thinking (The Oswego/Pestalozzian Method) principles

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[24]Jones , *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 7; Also see Henry Lee Swint*, The Northern Teacher in the South, 1862 – 1870* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1941); Butchart, *Northern Schools, Sothern Blacks, and Reconstruction*; Robert C. Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861 – 1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); On black teachers see Clara Merritt DeBoer, *His Truth Is Marching On: African Americans Who Taught the Freedmen for the American Missionary Association, 1861 – 1877* (New York: Garland, 1995); Adam Fairclough, "'Being in the Field of Education and also Being a Negro…Seems…Tragic': Black Teachers in the Jim Crow South," *Journal of American History* 87 (June 2000): 65-91.

to schooling in the postwar South. Object recognition and description would form the foundation by which many of the freedpeople would learn. In Washington, as in other cities, the AMA faced a new free-labor economy that had to find a place for freed workers. Instead of attempting to restructure the labor market, the teachers attempted to mold freed people into the existing market with an emphasis on such values as punctuality, thrift, industriousness, frugality, and regularity. However, in the nation's capital, society agents were confronted with the inability of the market to promote basic sanitation, housing, and employment.

As Robert Harrison notes in his work on the Freedmen's Bureau in the District, "Washington housed a large number of agents of northern freedmen's aid societies, who not only provided a great deal of support and assistance to the Bureau but also worked to influence policies." To a greater degree than in the Bureau's other areas of operation, policies in Washington emerged from complex negotiations between the agency and the civilian agents, many of them women, on whose efforts and enthusiasm it heavily depended." The role of female activists in particular has been extensively explored in a recent book by Carol Faulkner. "Though clearly a legacy of the expanded wartime state and always regarded as temporary, the Freedmen's Bureau explored the possibilities as well as the limitations of government action in guiding social change. This was especially evident in Washington. The challenge of the urban environment probed the limits of its capabilities and revealed unexpected elements of its character. The role of the association in reconstructing the South cannot be understood

without considering the urban contours of its activities.[25]

As elsewhere in the South, benevolent associations in the District of Columbia worked to ensure schooling of freedpeople, passageway to labor opportunities, and formalization of marriages. The agency used hospitals and surgeries to deliver medical services. The Bureau collaborated with benevolent societies on the education of black children by providing unused government buildings for schools, furniture and equipment for classrooms, and food and fuel for schools at government rates and laid the foundations for a school system for black children. It also supported seven industrial schools where freedwomen were trained as seamstresses.

Religious reconstruction, like political reconstruction, was not an impersonal historical process. Individuals--women and men, blacks and whites, southerners and Northerners—thought, spoke, acted, and reacted according to their perceptions of God's will. Their collective words and actions shaped religious reconstruction, and their decisions had profound, and frequently unforeseen, effects on community as well as their own religious lives.

In the context of Religious Reconstruction, individuals--women and men, blacks and whites, southerners and Northerners—thought, spoke, acted, and reacted according to their respective perceptions of God's will. Their collective words and actions shaped religious reconstruction, and their decisions had profound, and frequently unforeseen, effects on community as well as their own religious lives and practices. AMA missionaries epitomized the demonstration of evangelical zeal that their AMA administrators had perfected within the free

[25] Robert Harrison, “Welfare and Employment Policies of the Freedmen’s Bureau in the District of Columbia” in The *Journal of Southern History* 72 (Feb. 2006), 75-110.

missions movement decades before Reconstruction. A few missionaries felt wholeheartedly that their religious work was meant to erase all traces of slavery from freedmen and prepare them for citizenship. They preferred, or rather created, a "Godly" society before seeking one of civility. The Association's members developed a particular understanding of the Providence of emancipation, and in turn, unfurled the banner of salvation in the struggle for the soul of the urban South.

The American Missionary Association contributed in various ways to the process of religious Reconstruction in Washington, D.C. United by the belief that God was actively at work in the Civil War and its aftermath through Providence, it struggled to comprehend what His purposes were and to see the ultimate plan come to fruition – eliminating much of what blacks had learned as a part of slave religion in order to become part of a more "Godly" society. Hamstrung by overpopulation crime, grime, and slime, accompanied by a federal government and Congress that had limited financial resources, the Association's plans were curtailed by other challenges that signaled the demise of its work in the District of Columbia. The growth of Baptist churches throughout the city, Westward expansion into Mississippi, the growth of foreign missions, the rise of Dwight Moody's revivalism in Chicago, a revival of missions among Native Americans, and the dream of building an institution of higher education in Washington, D.C. that was modeled after those in the North, the AMA's religious program was unsuccessful when considering awareness, exposure, effort, and preparation for what blacks were bound to face. The rise of a federalized schooling and the establishment of Howard University, coupled

with the abandonment of benevolent missions in the District of Columbia, the masses of freedpeople yearning to be free were left with “nothin’ but ‘ligion.”

Chapter 2
The Origins of the American Missionary Association

In September 3, 1846, the American Missionary Association (AMA) was established at the Second Convention for Bible Missions in Albany, New York. Convened for the purpose of considering "the best – the scriptural methods and instrumentalities of missionary effort – to inquire whether those methods are employed and those instrumentalities supplied, the present missionary societies of our country, and, if not, to designate such instrumentalities and methods, and enter into the proper arrangements for sustaining and employing them," members of the Union Missionary Society, the Western Evangelical Missionary Society, and the Committee for West Indian Missions, founded the new Association in a "spirit of harmony" and "entire unanimity." The groups' response to the reigning missionary efforts of the day was to establish an independent, non-sectarian, non-ecclesiastical organization whose membership and funds were open to anyone who professed Christian or evangelical sentiments, and who was not a slaveholder, "or in the practice of other immoralities" such as polygamy, caste, oppression, idolatry, and the other sins peculiar to their respective fields. The Association received its charter from the state of New York in 1849 and located its home office in New York City.[1]

[1] Joyce Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 2005), 16-24; Lewis Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles &c.&c.* (New York: American Missionary Association, 1855), 3; Clara M. DeBoer, *Be Jubilant My Feet: African American Abolitionists in the American Missionary Association , 1839 – 1861* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994), 24-44 ; American Missionary Association, *History of the American Missionary Association: With Illustrative Facts and Anecdotes* (New York: Bible House, 1891), 3; Augustus Field Beard, *A Crusade of Brotherhood: A History of the American Missionary Association* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1909), 31-32; Clifford H. Johnson, "The American Missionary Association,

As Christian abolitionists, the chief founders of the AMA developed aggressive plans for challenging the fellowship of slaveholders and ending slavery. The large missionary boards attempted to derail the anti-slavery challenge by isolating and silencing their opponents. They pointed to the harmony that existed before the AMA's secession and noted that the organizational structure was that of "closed corporation[s], self perpetuating in membership, accountable to no ecclesiastical body or any other power, with its supporters, including the honorary members, having no vote or voice in its management." Firm believers in a moderate approach to anti-slavery, the leaders of voluntary organizations vehemently opposed the former members who sought aggressively attack slavery throughout the United States. Arguing instead that the voluntary societies could better end slavery by letting "every missionary draw his own conclusions from the word of God, and to adopt his own policy of combatting slavery," they denounced the new mission's activists as illogical, radical, and unnecessary. They noted that the network of churches, denominations, newspapers, and established missions was proof of their commitment to the era's principle of perfectibility. In response to criticism by the benevolent leaders, Christian abolitionists asserted that slaveholding was a sin and that no benevolent institution should fellowship with slaveholders.[2] One wrote: "Abolitionism, before the division was a powerful elixir, in the phial of one anti-slavery organization, corked up tight, and carried about for exhibition. By the division, the phial was broken and the contents spilled

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1846 – 1861, A Study of Christian Abolitionism" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1958) 87, 90; Joe M. Richardson*, Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861 – 1890* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008), vii.

[2]Johnson, "AMA," 10-11.

over the whole surface of society, where it has been working as a leaven, ever since, till the mass is beginning to upheave."[3] While volunteer organizations that were supported by slaveholders had difficulty assigning missionaries to anti-slavery posts, the Christian abolitionists who were now radicalized asserted that such assignments violated the laws of God, humanity, and the republic.[4]

As the radical abolitionists fought the voluntary associations over the objectives of missions, foreign and domestic, the divide between the groups grew wider as additional groups sought membership in the new movement. With zeal, piety, and untiring energy, many of the new missionaries prepared to venture to Africa, the Great Plains, and the West Indies. Meanwhile, the leaders of the free missions movement, whom the radical abolitionist thought would expel slaveholders from the membership rolls, ignored both the theological challenges and the pro-slavery implications of allowing the open enrollment of hundreds of ministers, leaders, stewards, trustees, exhorters, local preachers, deacons, and elders who owned and sold slaves. The Christian abolitionists were even more radicalized when they discovered that denominations and Bible societies duplicitously kept denominational fellowship after splitting with the slaveholding majority and refused to distribute Bibles to slaves or print antislavery tracts. In the West, no action was taken against slaveholders in the Cherokee and Choctaw missions. "In spite of all…[the] disgraceful facts, that 'the missionaries among these Indians have been faithful in their work!" wrote one abolitionist minister, "Faithful, in allowing a

[3]Ibid, 4.

[4]Ibid, 42.

pernicious and destructive vice to go without rebuke in the nation, in admitting determined practitioners of it to membership in the church, and in refraining from admonition of these church members on the express ground that 'it would seem to personal'! Are these fair specimens of what the Prudential Committee send out for Christian minister?" But the evidence assigned by the report in question for considering these pro-slavery missionaries 'faithful, is 'the hopeful converts among the Choctaws being proportionally more numerous than those in any other mission connected with the Board, except that at Sandwich Islands.' "If the standard of church character was so low among the Choctaws," wrote George Whipple, "that continuance in pernicious and destructive vices did not interfere with membership; if "professors of religion" there might practice without rebuke something that justice, humanity and Christian principle demanded to be abolished, perhaps this would more plausibly account for the boasted proportional number of church members."[5]

The founders of the AMA believed that the Board's policy limited the effectiveness of the mission movement, and prevented able-bodied Christians from opening foreign and home mission stations. From denying pious students who were enthusiastic about taking up their charge to overlooking seasoned missionaries because of their anti-slavery beliefs, the free mission bureaucracy was unable to missionize efficiently.

The ecclesiastical, civil, and social need to missionize at home and abroad thus created conflict between the radical Christian abolitionists and organizations in the voluntary missions

[5]Ibid, 72.

movement, who, following the policy of the predominant organizations, either denied or ignored the radical abolitionists' requests to open new missionary fields; measures that would certainly agitate the issue of slavery. Consequently, the voluntary mission movement failed to provide social and spiritual relief to slaves. Not until September 1846, when the Union Missionary Society, Western Evangelical Missionary Society, and the Committee for West Indian Missions merged to form the American Missionary Association did the radical Christian abolitionists gain momentum in the fight to end slavery and missionize among emerging populations, foreign and domestic. But, even then, the expansive and multidirectional outlook of the association proved to be more than it could handle. By the onset of the Civil War, in 1861, the debate over missions would no longer take place between voluntary organizations and the AMA, but instead between association officials who viewed relief as a salvific enterprise.

From the mid-eighteenth century to the Civil War, the question of slavery remained at the center of American life and culture. During the Revolutionary period, one of the charges made against the King in the *Declaration of Independence* is that the "has excited domestic insurrection against us," a veiled reference to *Lord Dunmore's Proclamation* - an attempt by the British Army to encourage slaves in the southern colonies to take up arms against their patriot owners. The British Army offered freedom to any slave who fought on the side of the Loyalists. Although some slaves gained freedom by fighting in the Continental Army, the Patriot cause

was, on the whole identified with preserving the institution of slavery, while the British crown and the Loyalists were associated with its abolition.[6]

The movement to end slavery arose in the North out of the catalyst of the Revolution. Beginning with Vermont, the northern states took steps to abolish the institution. Its northern demise was prompted by the perceived incompatibility between the ideals of the new republic and slavery. But ending slavery did not end the oppression of black people in the North. Free blacks achieved neither social nor political equality with whites. The majority of free blacks in the North had at least some connection to the abolitionist movement. If they were not members of an abolitionist organization, they at least read abolitionist newspapers or took part in antislavery meetings. Three-fourths of the initial subscribers to Garrison's *Liberator* were blacks. It is not difficult to understand why abolitionism was immensely appealing to free blacks. Most believed that the institution of slavery was to blame for the intense discrimination directed at them; ending slavery, according to black abolitionists like Frederick Douglass, would result in the ending of racism. In any event, the abolition of slavery was likely to make their situation better. More well-to-do blacks who, on account of their color, found themselves denied access to privileges or respect that their economic status might have otherwise afforded them, were especially drawn to abolitionism for this reason. But free black people also

[6] For an understanding of slavery during the Colonial Period, see Bernad Bailyn, *The Ideological origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) and David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975).

identified with their brothers in bondage; this was especially true for abolitionist leaders like Douglass and Harriet Tubman, who had recently escaped from slavery.[7]

Abolitionism was sustained by those who believed slavery undermined the emerging republic. According to classical republican theory, slavery endangered the republic in a number of ways: first, slaves were incapable of republican citizenship because they did not have control over their own persons. Second, slavery, as practiced in the United States, produced a large class of slaveholders who exerted a disproportionate influence on society. Slave owners could subvert the public good through their economic power and could buy the allegiance of the public, thereby jeopardizing republican society. Thomas Jefferson theorized that slavery encouraged laziness among slave owners and undermined the virtue necessary for a successful republic. Having the power to command other people, observed Jefferson, often led to people indulging their basest impulses. Many slave holders physically abused their slaves beyond what was necessary to maintain slave discipline, simply to satisfy a sadistic desire. Such slaveholders obviously lacked the self-discipline necessary to be good citizens. Ultimately, the republic required citizens who demonstrated virtuous characters. Work, not idleness, was symbolic of virtue. While efforts to end slavery were ever-present, initially, the movement was dominated

[7] A sense of abolitionism's impact on American society during this period can be gathered from John Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); Ronald G. Walters, *The Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978).

by the conviction that slavery was to end gradually, so as not to jeopardize the economic interests of slaveholders or public safety.[8]

The early Southern abolitionists – particularly after the founding of the American Colonization Society in 1816 – were also committed to repatriating the freed slaves to the newly created colony of Liberia in Africa. In fact, some slave owners, who did not support abolition, supported colonization because they saw it as a way to get rid of the slaves who had already been freed, so that these freedmen would not be able to "cause trouble", and would not "pollute" white society. During this same period, the vast majority of southern planters recommitted themselves to slavery, as cotton culture made slavery very profitable once again. In 1831, Nat Turner's rebellion set off a debate in the Virginia State legislature over whether to end slavery, or to fortify it by outlawing abolitionism and by enacting much stricter slave codes. The latter position ended up carrying the day. Soon Virginia and the rest of the south was closing down abolitionist newspapers, forbidding the delivery of abolitionist's materials in the mail, and forcing, under the threat of violence, any remaining supporters of abolitionism to leave the region. By 1833, the movement for gradual emancipation was dead.[9]

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[8] Bailyn, *The Ideological origins of the American Revolution, 236, 241*.

[9] Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic,* 36, 57, 187, 351; Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 4-8; Walters, *The Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 183*0, 96; Walters, *American Reformers 1815-1860*, 78, 94.

A more radical abolitionist movement had already emerged among blacks, led mostly by ministers and other professionals, who rejected both gradualism and colonization. These black abolitionists demanded full equality for black people—that they be protected as citizens under the Constitution, and that they be given the rights which the Declaration of Independence proclaimed belonged to all men. By 1831, blacks were joined by the white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, whose newspaper the *Liberator* - begun in that year, echoed their call for the immediate abolition of slavery. This interracial abolitionist movement differed qualitatively from the abolitionist movements of the late 18th and 19th centuries, not only in the fact that it included black people, but also because it focused on slavery from the slaves' point of view, as it attacked slavery as a moral abomination because of the unspeakable cruelty it inflicted on African- Americans. The movement soon found an organizational base; the white-led New England Anti-Slavery Society was formed in 1832 and in December, 1833, the American Anti-Slavery Society was created in Philadelphia, expanding abolitionism's organizational base throughout the North.[10]

Abolitionists lived in northern society in which the majority of citizens no longer made their living through subsistence or semi-subsistence farming, but through producing for the market. Articulating the main tenets of the "free-labor" ideology, abolitionists recognized the

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[10]Numerous passages provide insight into the Garrisonian Movement: Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*; Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*; Walters, *The Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830*; Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860*.

changes that their society had recently undergone and drew upon these change to make their case against slavery. In short, much of the abolitionist opposition to slavery stemmed from the fact that it contradicted the ideal of liberal capitalism, according to which everyone was seen as equal before the law, and equal in the marketplace.[11]

Abolitionists argued that in a society in which people depended upon a trade for a living, having something to sell was essential for survival. In order to have something to sell, however, a person must first own himself. Thus, everyone must have the right to self-ownership in order to be free: this was a right that could not be alienated.[12]

If one did not own the means of production and thus could not sell something that he had produced, then at least he could sell his ability to work, or in other words, go to work for wages. If a person had control over what they had to sell in the free market - that is, they could freely accept or reject what was being offered - then they were considered free. It was the fact that slaves did not have a choice, even more than the cruelty which slaves experienced, which many radical abolitionists found degrading about slavery.[13]

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[11] Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1763-1789*, 170-171.

[12] Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*, 117.

[13] Ibid.

While the reasons for free black people's attraction to abolitionism are readily grasped, it is somewhat puzzling why some whites were drawn to the movement - especially since racism was so endemic in the U.S., and since abolitionist were so unpopular, even in the North. Part of the reason that a small minority of whites were attracted to abolitionism is that in the increasingly bourgeois society of the North, slavery came to seem antithetical to prevailing values, even while racism kept most whites from confronting this fact. As Northerners were becoming committed to a market economy, they were concurrently developing a faith in progress and civilization – ideas which a market economy would supposedly help make a reality. Their notions of civilization and progress were informed by Protestant Christianity, which tended to equate material progress with moral progress, and therefore viewed impediments to progress as sin. The barbaric institution of slavery was increasingly viewed in the North as an obstacle to civilization and progress, in part because it retarded the South and the nation economically. But in the view of many northerners, slavery, in addition, undermined moral virtue. In attempting to improve the moral character of society, abolitionism thus shared the same goal of other reform movements.[14]

By 1840 a deep schism had developed in the abolition movement. The American Anti-Slavery Society, a symbol of the abolition crusade, splintered during its annual meeting in New York in that year. It spawned a number of fledgling organizations that struggled for leadership, membership, and income. Dissenting against the domination of William Lloyd Garrison, many

[14] Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic, 148 - 173*.

of the members coalesced around the establishment of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (AFASS) which rejected Garrison's view that women could serve in leadership positions, and his insistent denunciation of American churches for their complicity with slavery.[15]

The schism did not weaken the fervor of the abolition crusade. Abolitionist ideas would set fire to new movements with greater effectiveness, including the Liberty, Free Soil, and Republican parties. Abolitionism also had a powerful influence on benevolent organizations. There were religious cleavages in the abolitionist movement resulting from different philosophies of the role of the church and the expediency of direct benevolent action.[16]

Among the ranks of the "new" abolitionist groups were anti-church abolitionists, Christian abolitionists, and anti-slavery Christians. They agreed only in their opposition to pro-slavery religion. However, they held divergent views on whether the churches were guilty of tolerating and condoning slavery, the role churches should play in the abolition crusade, and the relationship that anti-slavery men and women should sustain to organized religion.

The first clear distinction is between anti-church and Christian abolitionists. Anti-church abolitionists, or "come-outers" as they were sometimes called by their opponents, were largely non-church members who were animated by the notion that pro-slavery forces had taken over the churches of the United States, making them firmly wedded to slavery and thus beyond reclamation.[17]

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[15] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War against Slavery* (Cleveland: the Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969), 197- 200.

[16]Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860,* 92 - 100.

[17] Walters, *The Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830*, 48.

This group was largely affiliated with William Lloyd Garrison and the American and Anti-Slavery Society. After a childhood filled with much hardship, followed by uncertain years as a printer's apprentice and editor, Garrison was running a small Baptist temperance journal when in 1829 he was converted to the anti-slavery cause by Benjamin Lundy. A New Jersey Quaker, Lundy had organized the Union Humane Society in 1815. In 1821, as antislavery assumed prominence among his varied reform interests, he founded the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*. Before the year was out Garrison was helping to edit Lundy's *Genius*, and he was soon jailed for libel. Upon his release he went back Boston to found the *Public Liberator and Journal of the Times*; and in the first issue (1 January 1831) he took the stand that was to make him famous - and infamous: "I will be as harsh as truth, and as than compromising as justice. On this subject [of slavery] I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation…..I am in earnest – I will not equivocate—I will not excuse - high and I will not retreat a single inch – AND I WILL BE HEARD."

Now an opponent of colonization and no longer a gradualist, Garrison demanded abolition immediately. Yet he drastically reduced the useful impact of his zeal by his absolutism, his lack of charity toward those who disagreed with him, his incapacity to understand the thought or predicament of others, his unyielding demand for women's rights within the movement, his fierce anticlericalism and increasingly radical religious views, his almost anarchistic pacifism, his reputation of political action, and (after 1843) his demand for *Northern* secession on the grounds that the Constitution was a compact with the devil. The extent of his influence on abolition will probably always be disputed; but there is little doubt

that he did far more than any other man to heighten Southern opposition to emancipation. Yet Garrison was not alone; to the end he had a hard core of followers, some even more radical than he. [18]

Garrison denounced organized religion in America as "a religion which quadrates with the natural depravity of the heart, giving license to sin, restraining no lust, … engendering selfishness, and cruelty!...a religion which has no courage, no faithfulness, no self-denial, deeming it better to give heed unto men than unto God!" The extinction of the American church was necessary for the success of the anti-church abolition crusade, along with a strict adherence to the belief that insisted that no anti-slavery man could remain and fellowship with the current churches. It was neither possible for churches to adopt anti-slavery positions nor could they organize new churches based on anti-slavery principles. The absolutism of the anti-church movement led many abolitionists to believe the objective of "come-outism" was to destroy Christianity in America.[19]

Christian abolitionists were church members who held memberships in the ranks of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, one of the societies that formed when the American Anti-Slavery Society splintered. Christian abolitionists believed that the churches should be reformed from within, reformation of churches must be immediate and complete, and churches must be freed from all connection with slavery and apologists for slaveholding. They

[18] Sydney Ahlstrom, *The Religious History of American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 651-652.

[19]Johnson, "AMA," 7.

fundamentally believed that slaveholding was a sin regardless of the inception of the relationship.[20]

Christian abolitionists attacked denominations and voluntary organizations that were supported by slavery or tolerated slaveholding as fervently as anti-church abolitionist attacked sacred institutions. Vehemently opposed to the "fellowship of slaveholders", Christian abolitionists tried to identify and remove the stain of slavery from Christian bodies. They demanded that the churches rigorously execute discipline on this principle, whatever the consequences for the ecclesiastical order. Plainly, according to Christian abolitionists, slaveholding was a sin.[21]

The American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, the leading Christian Abolitionist organization, stated: "That while we lament the general reluctance of ecclesiastical bodies, the clergy and benevolent institutions to acknowledge the inherent sinfulness of slaveholding, We rejoice that so many are bearing witness to turpitude, as a sin per se, and by applying the principles of Christianity to the practical duties the life, are endeavoring to banish it from the Church of Christ."[22] In some cases, when Christian abolitionists became convinced that their

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[20] Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic, 158, 170, 184;* Walters, *The Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830, 3, 7;* Walters, *American Reformers 1815-1860*, 90 – 91; Quarles, *Black Abolitionists*, 45-46; Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War against Slavery*, 199.

[21] Johnson, "AMA,"9.

[22]American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, *The Annual Reports of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, presented at New York, May 7, 1850 with the Addresses and Resolutions* (New York: Published by A. & F. Anti-Slavery Society, 1850), 11, in Johnson, "AMA," 10.

efforts to purify existing religious bodies were futile, they also favored secession; but then free churches or societies were to be established, which would lend their influence to the campaign to reform other bodies.

Antislavery Christians occupied the moderate ground in opposition to anti-church and Christian abolitionists. They often defended the American churches against the attacks of the anti-church abolitionists and Christian abolitionists. Anti-slavery abolitionists believed the institution of slavery was an evil and maintained that the church had responsibility for promoting emancipation. To anti-slavery Christians, slaveholding was a sin when the relationship was sustained voluntarily, with an evil purpose, and with immoral treatment of the slave.[23]

The rationale of moderate anti-slavery Christianity is ably illustrated in the views of Albert Barnes, an anti-slavery minister of the New School Presbyterian Church: "it is probable that slavery could not be sustained in this land if it were not for the countenance, direct and indirect, of the churches." New School Presbyterians fellowshipped slaveholders and had slaveholding ministers while repeatedly providing testimony against slavery in the New School General Assembly.[24]

According to anti-slavery Christians, discipline of slave holders was left up to the individual churches. They were opposed to the excommunication of slaveholders by the

[23] Johnson, "AMA," 11-12

[24] Albert Barnes, *The Church and Slavery*, (Philadelphia: Parry & McMillan, 1857), 28, 67 -121. Ahlstrom, *The Religious History of American People*, 650, 663-665.

churches on the grounds that the removal of those who most needed to be reformed would defeat the purpose of the church. Reformation could best be accomplished inside the church, rather than out. Come-outism was not the platform for those who held high the sacred principles of the church.[25]

Christian abolitionists denounced the Antislavery abolitionists as infidels who passed resolutions and gave testimony against slavery, without applying discipline against the pro-slavery members. They believed anti-slavery abolitionists had adopted an illogical, insincere, inexcusable position: “the church knows the evil, but nevertheless hugs it to her bosom."[26]

Christian Abolitionists’ views of the Methodist Episcopal Church and Baptists during the mid-nineteenth century demonstrates the duplicity among antislavery Christians. Having divided along sectional lines over the issue of slavery in 1845, both northern branches of the denominations maintained an acceptable anti slavery standard for the antislavery Christians. Christian abolitionists, on the other hand, held that the schisms served only to confuse and draw attention away from the real proslavery character of the northern Methodist and Baptist churches.[27]

Christian abolitionists set out to make a clear distinction in the actions of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the denominational separation. They held it to be of no significance since,

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[25] Johnson, “AMA,” 8-9; Walters, *The Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830*; 47-49.

[26] Walters, *The Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830*; 47-49.

[27] Ibid,

first, the division in the Methodist Episcopal denomination was over slaveholding in the episcopacy and not over the general issue of slaveholding in the general conference. Second, the southern faction initiated the separation, but many prominent churchmen continued to strive for unity and the reuniting of the denomination. Third the general conference acted in 1845 only out of a matter of expediency and not as a matter of principle. Fourth, it was shown that the Methodist Episcopal church still fellowshipped slaveholders and ordained slaveholding ministers. According to one non-Methodist critic, there were, in 1853, live-in churches affiliated with the northern conference with, "not less than 4000 slaveholders, and 27,000 slaves." As late as 1858, a Methodist abolitionist said we now have from 10 to 20,000 slaveholders in our church, among whom are hundreds of leaders, stewards, trustees, exhorters and local preachers, deacons, and Elders, who sell slaves, as suits their convenience and interests, and with other impunity."[28]

Having split over the appointment of slaveholders to missionary posts during the triennial session, the northern Baptists who were strictly congregational in their government had a policy on the slavery issue that could be considered as general expression of the Baptist church. Slaveholders were admitted to church membership and the Christian abolitionists waited for the American Baptist Home Mission Society in 1844 for Baptists to take a stand on the anti-slavery issue. Christian abolitionists claimed that if northern Baptists were sincerely anti-slavery in sentiment after the southern secession, they would either have joined in the support of the abolitionist American Baptist Free Mission Society, established in 1843, or on

[28] Ibid, 15; Ahlstrom, *The Religious History of American People*, 650, 661-663.

new missionary boards based on abolitionist principles. Instead of doing either, the vast majority of the Baptist churches in the north continued to support the American Baptist Home Mission Society and organized the American Baptist mission union as their agency for foreign missions. The Baptists did not take a stand against slavery, but added the statement "disclaiming any action for or against slavery, and leaving each member free to be a slaveholder or an abolitionist, as he pleased." [29]

There were conciliatory policies adopted in order to remain friendly with the southern Baptists. Even though the Home Missionary Society adopted a new constitution in 1846, and refused thereafter to aid pastors of slaveholding churches or to appoint slaveholding missionaries, the Christian abolitionists still insisted that the Society had not cut "loose from slavery," and pointed out that it had failed to expel its slaveholding life members and that its reports maintaining a "studied silence on the subject."[30]

In the mid 19th century, Christian abolitionists were cordial to smaller religious bodies such as the Wesleyan Methodist, Freewill Baptists, the American Baptist Free Mission Society, the Associate Reformed Presbyterians, and some of the pietistic sects, which represented only a small number within the population of religious bodies. Most church bodies retained their national character with memberships from both the north and south by avoiding the slavery issue and maintaining a neutral position, which in practice, meant that they fellowshipped

[29] Ahlstrom, *The Religious History of American People*, 650, 663-665; Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1992), 178-180.

[30] Johnson, "AMA,"18.

slaveholders. When attacked by the anti-slavery agitators, they used scripture as their defense and argued that slavery was a civil institution and therefore not subject to the jurisdiction of the church. Church bodies that were known by these arguments include Protestant Episcopal, the Protestant Methodist, and the Lutherans. The more localized bodies, Cumberland Presbyterians and Disciples of Christ, assumed positions similar to the more popular churches. Ecclesiastical bodies that had large elements of Christian abolitionists within the congregations, predominantly northern denominations, especially the New School Presbyterian, Congregational, and Dutch Reformed Churches, were regarded by the general public as anti-slavery in principle. However, Christian abolitionists devoted less effort to reforming the churches from within these particular denominations.[31]

After 1838, all variations of the slavery debate from proslavery sentiments to radical abolitionism were presented in the New School Presbyterian church. Moderate anti-slavery positions were chief among the arguments in the general assembly of that year calling the system of American slavery an evil, “leading to much sin," and “a gross violation of the most precious in sacred rites of human nature, utterly inconsistent with the law of God, until the year reconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ." More radical, Christian abolitionists railed against the moderates, calling the New School Presbyterians’ stance on slavery “confused, incongruous, and so contradictory." Slaveholding was not considered by the general assembly as tantamount to Christian communion and was left to church discipline where “the laws of the state, the obligations of guardianship, and the demands of humanity,"

[31] Johnson, “AMA,” 20-21.

rendered it “unavoidable." Consequently, slaveholding did continue in the New School Presbyterian Church and the leading factor in the schisms of 1847 and 1857. New School Presbyterians were also criticized for their silence on slavery through their support of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Home Missionary Society, and other benevolent organizations.[32]

In the 1840s, Congregationalism was largely a northern denomination that supported the anti-slavery principle. Its churches had little or no direct contact with slavery and were governed by local ecclesiastical bodies which meant that there was no hierarchy to follow. In most cases local, states, and regional conclaves issued strong denunciations of slavery. Nevertheless, there were foundational Congregationalist churches that were attacked for supporting slavery and slave-promoting organizations like American Board of commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Home Missionary Society, and other societies. Abolitionists insisted that the anti-slavery resolutions meant little unless followed by the withdrawal of support from societies that gave appropriation to mission churches containing slaveholders. Cooperating with New School Presbyterians in the exchange of delegates for ecclesiastical meetings and the proslavery editorial statements made in some of the congregational publications garnered additional criticism for Congregationalists.[33]

The Dutch Reformed Church maintained a similar position as New School Presbyterians, with whom it cooperated in missionary activities through the American Board of

[32] Ibid., 22-23; Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of American People*, 465 - 468, 659 - 661; Winthrop Hudson and John Corrigan, *Religion in America*, 5th ed. (New York: Macmillian Publishing, 1992), 200-201.

[33] Johnson, “AMA,” 23-24; Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of American People*, 660.

Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Located almost entirely in free states, its congregations had few abolitionist members. However, Dutch Reformed journals took a hostile view of abolitionism.

The Christian abolitionists and anti-slavery Christians incurred opposition from persons who could not distinguish between the principles of the two. Proslavery factions upheld slavery on scriptural grounds. Another faction, a combination between proslavery, anti-slavery, and neutral leanings believed that slavery was a peaceable institution that agitated the church by merely politicized the institution. The proslavery factions, with its aversion towards politics in the churches, were strengthened by the fact that they often defended the status quo, while the anti slavery Christians were reluctant in advocating a program that would disrupt their churches. Anti-slavery Christians were the most influential and largest group in number. The Christian abolitionists were the smallest and most controversial group. Often described as focused, vocal, and zealous, their national anti-slavery political conviction would eventually build momentum and carry a determined agitation from ecclesiastical gatherings, “Christian Anti-Slavery Conventions", and prayer meetings which would gain additional inspiration.[34]

While the Christian abolitionists attempted to reform the churches, the interdenominational free missions movement began to flourish. Advancing the principles of Christian abolitionism among the benevolent agencies (i.e. missionary societies) to which their support was given, the leaders of the movement responded to missionaries who were

[34] Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic, 210-215*.

conflicted about promoting Christian principles abroad that were not being practiced domestically. They argued that true Christian abolitionist principles should be propagated abroad and they therefore sought to reform the leading missionary societies of the period: the American Bible Society (ABS), American Tract Society (ATS), American Home Missionary Society (AHMS), the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM). These agencies were most vulnerable to reform since they were founded by New England men, depended upon northeastern Presbyterians and Congregationalist for the major share of their support, and would certainly provide unqualified testimony against slavery if they were to express the use of their supporters. The ABCFM and AHMS, according to the leaders of the free missions movement, had no reason to debate the issue of slaveholding since they drew none of their support from the south.[35]

The free missions movement drew support from several denominations, but it was chiefly the work of Congregationalist and Presbyterians who were members of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Luther Lee, a Wesleyan Methodist, and William Jay, an Episcopalian, were two members of its executive committee who were especially prominent in the free missions movement. Arthur Tappan, a guiding light in the movement, was instrumental in the formation of and contributor to the American Tract Society, supported the American Home Missionary Society, and served on the American Bible Society board from 1828 to 1834. Along with his brother, Lewis, Arthur Tappan took an aggressive approach in

[35] Robert T. Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 176-177.

advocating the adoption of abolitionist principles among the voluntary benevolent societies. Lewis Tappan became the foremost leader of the free missions movement, and Arthur Tappan gave it his unqualified support. Other officers who were prominent in the free missions movement included Simeon Smith Jocelyn and George Whipple.

The membership of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society were influenced by the great revivals conducted earlier in the century by Charles Grandison Finney. Filled with "a spirit of expansive benevolence," they were inspired to contribute much of their time and money to the work of the great voluntary societies. For example, Arthur and Lewis Tappan were disciples of Finney's revivalism, and their "benevolent giving reached out in every direction and took in every good cause." Finney never led the free missions movement, but his influence was manifested in the leadership of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Other than in New York City, the most prominent spokesmen and strongest support for the movement were found in upper New York State and Ohio, where Finney conducted his greatest revival efforts.[36]

Charles Grandison Finney, "the father of modern revivalism," was born in Warren, Connecticut, but two years later his parents joined the westward trek, so that he grew up in small towns in Oneida and Jefferson counties in Central New York. Returning to Warren for secondary schooling, Finney kept school for a while. In 1818 began to practice law in Adams, New York, where he came under the influence of a young Presbyterian minister, George W.

[36] Sydney Ahlstrom, *The Religious History of American People*, 459-461.

Gale (later the founder of Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois). Finney admired Gale personally, but disagreed violently with his theological views. Led by a personal reading of the scriptures, the skeptical lawyer experienced a soul-shaking conversion in 1821, which he said brought him "a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead his cause." His career as a highly successful converter of souls began that very week on the streets of Adams. Refusing formal theological training but already evincing great power as the preacher, Finney was licensed – somewhat reluctantly – by the local Saint Lawrence Presbytery. Soon he was making news in the local papers, and before long he gained national attention for a series of spectacular evangelistic meetings in Rome, Utica, Troy, and in other cities along the Erie Canal.[37]

This is where the "new measures" with which Finney's name was to be linked took form. His speech was tough, direct, forceful – and inescapably popular. Like God, he was no respecter of persons: sinners were sinners. He prayed for them by name, and when the occasion required he included in his prayers any persons, lay or clerical, who were notable by their absence or their opposition to his efforts. Finney also departed from the regular stated times

[37]Ibid., 459-461. For the biography and analysis of Rev. Charles Grandison Finney during this period: Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800 – 1850* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815 – 1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); also helpful are Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 171-173, 181-183 and Hudson, *Religion in America*, 139-141.

Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, 174-178; Williston Walker, Richard A Norris, David W. Lotz, and Robert T. Handy, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed. (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1985), 653 - 655; Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860*, 22-23, 27-28; Walters, *The Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830*, 40-41.

for religious services and made extensive use of the "protracted meeting," which continued nightly for a week or more. He introduced the "anxious bench" to cull from the multitudes the almost-saved, so that they were made objects of special exhortation and prayer, and encouraged women to testify in public meetings, despite Saint Paul's admonition of female silence in the churches (I Cor. 14:34). He also discovered the advantages of publicity, and when his followers became sufficiently numerous, he was able to make a "team approach" to prospective Sodoms. Nor did Finney mince words of his efficacy; in his Lectures and Revivalism (1835) he declared that a "revival is not a miracle, or depended on a miracle in any sense. It is a purely philosophical [i.e. scientific] result of the right use of the constituted means."[38]

Finney's emphasis on the human production of conversions was not the only point on which he strayed from strict Westminster standards. And far from concealing the fact, he proclaimed it. From the first he demanded that some kind of relevant social action follow the sinner's conversion, and in time this led to an even more disturbing emphasis on "entire sanctification." In Finney's theology sin was a voluntary act and theoretically avoidable, hence holiness was a human possibility. Even from liberated ground of Taylorism, the Finneyite departures seemed bold and extreme.[39]

So alarmed and critical were Lyman Beecher, Asahel Nettleton, and a number of others prominent churchmen, that a conference of eight representatives of each party met 18-27 July 1827, in New Lebanon, New York, to discuss their differences. This meeting only heightened

[38] Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 459-461; Cross, *The Burned-Over District, 1800 – 1850*, 177.

[39] Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed., 653.

the rancor and perhaps signaled a renewal of the rupture in American Reformed tradition had been agitated periodically ever since the Great Awakening. "I know your plan," declared Beecher, "and you know I do. You mean to come into Connecticut, and carry a streak of fire to Boston. But if you attempt it, as the Lord livith, I'll meet you at the State line, and call out all the artillery-men, and fight every inch of the way to Boston I'll fight you there."[40]

Finney was not intimidated. He went on to new successes at Wilmington, Delaware, and Reading and Lancaster, Pennsylvania before moving on to New York City, where he preached for over a year under the patronage of Anson G. Phelps. By this time Finney was essentially a free-lance revivalist. After another year of touring, which included Boston, he returned in 1832 to New York to preach for a year In the Chatham Street Theater which Lewis Tappan and others rented for him. They called it the Second Free Presbyterian Church, for it had grown out of Finney's earlier ministry in New York; but even its "free-ness" was insufficient, and Finney soon withdrew to become an independent Congregationalist and Minister of the Broadway Tabernacle, which had been built for him. His tenure here was brief, however, since ill health and a complex series of events connected with the antislavery movement let him in 1835 to accept an appointment as professor of theology at the newly founded Oberlin College. He also served as president of Oberlin from 1851 to 1866, and his dynamic presence made Oberlin a center of influence for revival theology, the "new measures," and a growing emphasis or perfectionism - all combined with an urgent sense of Christian activism.[41]

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[40] Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 461.

[41] Ibid, 461.

Finney's revivals were a powerful force in the rising antislavery impulse and in the rise of urban evangelism. He was an influential revisionist in the reformed tradition, an enormously successful practitioner, almost the inventor, of the modern high–pressure revivalism which, as it spread, would have important consequences for the religious ethos of the nation as a whole. Yet Finney was also an extremely divisive figure, and in the Presbyterian Church the tensions created by his kind of ministry contributed to a recurrence of schism.[42]

In addition to his influence on the "burnt-over district" of upstate New York and the free missions movement, Finney was especially popular among the students and faculty of Oberlin college in Ohio. The Oberlites, as they were affectionately known, agreed with Christian abolitionism opinions, and most Oberlites had sided with the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society after the split from the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1840.[43]

Although Oberlin was theoretically a Congregational school, conservative Calvinists, among them both Presbyterians and Congregationalist, regarded the theology taught by Finney as Arminian heresy which was more akin to Methodism than Calvinism. Finney was the architect of the theology taught at the college and it began with the views of Jonathan Edwards, but ended with a theology that was distinguishable from New England Divinity. Finney discarded the doctrine of predestination, and constructed an exegesis where the individual had

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[42]Hudson, *Religion in America*, 172 - 173.

[43] Cross, *The Burned-Over District, 1800 – 1850*, 154-155, 168-169; Walters, *The Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830*, 38.

a choice in seeking or rejecting the salvation offered by Jesus Christ. Combined with his doctrine of "entire sanctification" or "perfectionism," Finney maintained that by absolute faith in Christ and through complete sanctification of the Holy Ghost, all temptation to sin would be removed and sinless perfection attained by the regenerate in this life. Finney briefly described his theological principle as follows: "the total moral, voluntary depravity of unregenerated man; the necessity of a radical change of heart, through the truth, by the agency of the Holy Ghost; the divinity and humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ; his vicarious atonement, equal to the wants of all mankind; the gift, divinity and agency of the Holy Ghost; repentance, faith, justification by faith, persistence in holiness as a condition of salvation."[44]

Despite its firm grounding in the perfectibility of U.S. society, the AHMS refused to assign Oberlites to fields of labor. The AHMS explained that Presbyteries and other association set the criteria for working within the labor fields and that the Presbyterians and Congregational associations in the East and West found Oberlites to be unacceptable. The ABCFM consistently refused to appoint Oberlin graduates and the friends of Oberlin regarded these exclusive policies as preventing pious young men and women who had imbibed the missionary spirit from serving as missionaries. Nevertheless, the AFASS set out to reform the

[44]Sweet, *Revivalism* in Johnson, "AMA," 33; Among the orthodox Calvinists, Oberlin's perfectionism was often confused with the antinomian perfectionism advocated by John Humphrey Noyes, and practiced by the Oneida Community. Finney's theology, however, differed from the Oneida variety of perfectionism in that it placed great emphasis on scriptural orthodoxy, while the latter was based on the belief that divine guidance superseded the scriptures. Noyes and his followers also gained much notoriety by joining "community living and the doctrines of eugenics and free love" with perfectionism. See *American Thought*, 310 and *History of Oberlin*, in Johnson, "AMA," 34.

societies on the slavery question and have the boards of the missionary societies endorse the principles of Christian abolitionism.[45]

The American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society had specific grievances against the leading missionary societies between 1843 and 1846. The AFASS railed against the ABS, a non-sectarian society organization founded in 1816, which sought the support of all evangelical Christians by distributing the Bible and religious literature to the destitute in America and of the world, but would not distribute Bibles to the slaves. They were somehow overlooked in 1829 campaign to supply every American home and every arriving immigrant with a Bible, despite announcing to its British counterpart, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the success of the program. In 1834, the American Anti-Slavery Society offered to give the ABS $5000 to aid in supplying the slaves with the scriptures, but the donation was refused.[46]

Despite the criticism of the AFASS, the ABS refused to circulate antislavery literature without the approval of all evangelical Christians upon whom it depended for support. Incorporated for the purpose of distributing “the holy scriptures, without note or comment, among destitute fellowmen of every name and nation, wherever they can be reached," the national office delegated the responsibility for distributing the Bibles and Testaments to the “wisdom and piety of the local associations in the different States and Territories." [47]

[45] Johnson, “AMA,” 35; DeBoer, *Be Jubilant My Feet*, 84-85.

[46] Johnson, “AMA,” 36.

[47] Ibid, 36-37.

Petitioners for the distribution of literature to the slaves were reminded of the lack of funds in the national organization's treasury and instructed to seek help from the local auxiliaries. At a meeting of the society in Cincinnati, in 1843, a resolution which recognized the limited power of the national organization over the auxiliaries and recommended that the local societies supply every destitute person -"bond and free"- with the scriptures was introduced. Abolitionist were incensed when the resolution was defeated, interpreting the ABS's inaction as reflecting a lack of desire to rein in the local organizations.[48]

Christian abolitionists demanded adherence to abolitionist principles. The primary objective for holding the ABS to a universal distribution plan was to incite public awareness against the sinfulness of denying the availability of the Holy Scriptures to anyone, particularly slaves. Christian abolitionists identified six of the slave states of the Upper South - Delaware, Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri – where Bible could be distributed to slaves. They had identified missionaries who were committed to supplying slaves in those states with the Bible.[49]

Similarly, the AFASS criticized the American Tract Society, an organization known for distributing religious books and tracts to the destitute, for neglecting the slaves in its outreach. The AFASS members wondered how the ATS could publish tracts against adultery, theft, Sabbath breaking, lotteries, tobacco, gambling, temperance, dancing, theatrical

[48] "Report to the Committee of the American Bible Society, on the Subject of Distributing the Scriptures among Slaves," American Bible Society 1847, as quoted in Johnson, "AMA," 37.

[49] Johnson, "AMA," 38-39.

entertainments, and other popular sins, but refuse to publish or circulate any tract against slavery. One Christian abolitionist asked, "is it not a pitiful spectacle, that of a great benevolent publishing society circulating …tracts which denounce the use of tobacco, novel reading, dancing, and sleeping in church, but at the same time effacing from its pages every sentence and word which rebukes the monstrous wickedness of slavery?"[50]

Two of the leading benevolent societies drew mixed support from clergy, churches, and benevolent societies of the post revolutionary and antebellum eras, despite their broad policy of appointing missionaries without regard to their views of slavery and receiving support from churches with slaveholding members. The American Home Missionary Society (AHMS) was established in 1826 as an interdenominational Society by a convention composed of Congregationalist, Presbyterians, Associate Reform Presbyterians, and members of the Dutch Reformed Church. At its beginning the society was largely Presbyterian in membership, but most of the local Congregational societies soon became auxiliaries. Shortly after its formation, the Dutch Reformed and Associate Reformed churches withdrew their support, and after the split of 1838, the Old School Presbyterians ceased to support the Society. Thereafter, it was almost exclusively supported by Congregationalists and New School Presbyterians. Similarly, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was established at a convention in Bradford, Massachusetts, in 1810, and its offices were located in Boston. It was Congregational in its origin, but became interdenominational in 1812, when Presbyterians were

[50]George Tacher, "No Fellowship with Slavery," A Sermon Delivered June 29, 1856 in the First Congregational Church, Meriden, Conn. (Meriden: L.R. Webb, 1856), 13, in Johnson, "AMA," 40.

elected to its board. Representatives of the Dutch Reformed Church were added four years later. The Board solicited funds from all denominations, but its support came principally from these three denominations during the antebellum period. The Old School Presbyterians withdrew their support in 1837, and the Dutch Reformed Churches withdrew in 1857 in order to promote their own sectarian interests in missionary activities. The New School Presbyterians continued to support the Board some extent until 1870, when they withdrew, leaving only the Congregationalists.[51]

William W. Patton, a prominent Congregationalist minister of Hartford, Connecticut and theologian during the Reconstruction period, was critical of the ABCFM for its decisive proslavery stance. He supported the AHMS because it left missionaries to reach their own conclusions from the word of God and to develop their own policy for fighting slavery. Another clergyman from Wisconsin supported the ABHS because it provided his livelihood: "here in Wisconsin they feel that they must depend on the AHMS or give up preaching. I have been on that ground myself. The last year received aid from the ABHS it was mainly on that consideration." [52]

Between 1837 and 1844, the momentum for reforming the existing benevolent societies steadily grew as there were open challenges to the work of the two largest voluntary organizations. David S. Ingraham, one of the Lane Seminary rebels, began when he led a group

[51] Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 423, 457, 465 - 466.

[52] Johnson, "AMA," 42.

of Oberlin college students in criticizing the ABCFM's policy of utilizing the labor of slaves among the Choctaw in the western mission. In the same year, several of the Board's missionaries in the Sandwich Islands sent the credential committee a tract and a series of resolutions encouraging American Christians to overthrow slavery in the United States. In the annual meeting in 1840, a group of Congregational and Presbyterian ministers of the state of New York petitioned against receiving contributions from slaveholders while seventeen ministers of New Hampshire queried the organization's silence on the subject of American slavery. Additionally, they expressed their belief that slavery had been brought "in the providence of God so distinctly into the notice of American Christians, but no man or body of men can innocently maintain a doubtful position in regard to it." The ministers said, "we think you may, and we frankly say you should make known your views and feelings on the subject, so that you may be recognized by all, as sympathizing with those Christians who deeply abhor that system of abomination."[53]

Although they responded to the many queries and challenges, the ABCFM's new policies further raised the ire of Christian Abolitionists. It declared against the missionaries hiring slaves, except in cases of emergency. The ABCFM forbade the use of missionary presses for antislavery appeals to the American public, which was regarded many as a reversal of previous policy. Nevertheless, the board confusingly stated with regard to the questions of slavery: "It is indeed perfectly evident that this Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions can sustain no relation to slavery, which implies approbation of the system, and as a Board can

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have no connection of sympathy with it. And, on the other hand, it is equally evident that the Board cannot be expected to pass resolutions, or adopt measures against this system, any more than against other specific forms of evil existing in the community. For we are met at once with the question, why we should express and proclaim our opinion in regard to one particular, in distinction from others, which are equally obvious and prevalent"[54]

Two examples of the society's ideological positions won special attention from the organization members and Christian Abolitionists. In 1842, questions arose as to whether Rev. J. Leighton Wilson, a missionary to Africa, would continue to retain possession of the slaves he had inherited prior to his appointment by the board. The board leapt to his defense, reporting that it had no knowledge of his continued ownership and that it hoped he would meet with the Prudential Committee and ultimately liberate them by means that would be kind and beneficial to them. At the same time, in relation to receiving slaveholding members and their contributions, and on taking a position against slavery, the members of the Board argued it would be "inconsistent to take money from men who are patronizing heathenism here under the pretense of converting men from heathenism in foreign countries." Accordingly, after 1840 and many debates over receiving the contributions of slaveholders, The ABCFM rejected the bequest from Philander Ware of $2000 in 1842, conditioned upon the Board's refusing to accept money from slaveholders.[55]

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While many existing benevolent societies resisted reform of their politics and policies, several agencies were formed based on the free mission's principles. The anti-slavery missionary agencies encapsulated the spirit and emotions of persons and groups who were not only compelled by the act of Grace, but motivated by Finneyite perfectionism where perfectible people form a perfectible group which forms a perfectible society. The storied past, bureaucracy, and camaraderie of dedicated members of the established voluntary organizations stood as examples of what could be accomplished. Born of third generation abolitionists, the three anti-slavery missionary agencies were devoted to limiting the spread of slavery and increasing the potential of manumission. However, what they did not know was the critical role each would play establishing one of the most seasoned and historic organizations, the American Missionary Association, committed to republican post-Second Great Awaking virtue - free labor, free soil, and free thinking, that would play an essential role in the transition between slavery and freedom.

The first anti-slavery missionary agency to emerge between 1840 and 1844 which grew out of the effort to reform voluntary religious societies had been established as a part of the Amistad Case. During the summer of 1839, fifty-three slaves were purchased at auction in Havana by Cubans, Don Jose Ruiz and Don Pedro Montez. The purchase of these slaves was in direct violation of international treaties meant to stop the slave trade. Ruiz and Montez hired

Ramon Ferrer, the owner and captain of the schooner Amistad, to transport the Mendians to Guanaja, the immediate port for Puerto Principe where Ruiz and Montez resided.[56]

After sailing for three days, the blacks --under the leadership of Cinque, one of their number - mutinied, killed the captain and ship's cook, and forced Ruiz and Montez to steer the ship. At the insistence of the mutineers, Ruiz and Montez sailed on a course due east by the sun, the slaves were intending to return the ship to Sierra Leone. Cinque relied upon the sun to chart the course during the day, however, at night the Cubans steered north and west towards the United States. After sixty-three days of chaotic sailing, the Amistad anchored off Long

[56] Fiction writers have captured the imaginations of readers using the Amistad Case as a lure. The first work of historical fiction was William A. *Owen's Black Mutiny: The Revolt on the Schooner Amistad* (New York: John Day Co., 1953). Mary *Cable's Black Odyssey: The Case of the Slave Ship "Amistad"* (New York: Viking Press, 1971) is a clear account of the mutiny and its proceedings. Literary scholars have issued their interpretations too: Maggie Montesinos Sale, *The Slumbering Volcano: American Slave Ship Revolts and the Production of Rebellious Masculinity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997) and Iyunola Falayyan Osegie, *The Amistad Revolt: Memory, Slavery and the Politics of Identity in the United States and Sierra Leone* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000). At the zenith of understanding the Amistad history is Marcus Rediker's *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom* (New York: Viking Press, 2012); Howard Jones' *Mutiny on the Amistad: The Saga of a Slave Revolt and its impact on American Abolition, Law, and Diplomacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Jones' research thoroughly discussed important facets of the case. Other complimentary scholarship includes James Miller, ed., "The Amistad Incident: Four Perspectives," *Occasional Papers of the Connecticut Humanities Council* 10 (1992); Arthur Abraham, *The Amistad Revolt: An Historical Legacy of Sierra Leone and the United States* (Washington, D.C. U.S. Department of State International Information Programs); David Brion Davis, "The Amistad Test of Law and Justice ," in his *Inhumane Bondage: Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World of Slavery* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2006) chap., 1; See Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation*, 4-16; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles &c.&c., 3-10;* DeBoer, *Be Jubilant My Feet: African American Abolitionists in the American Missionary Association , 1839 – 1861*, 25-31; American Missionary Association, *History of the American Missionary Association: With Illustrative Facts and Anecdotes, 3-4*; Augustus Field Beard, *A Crusade of Brotherhood: A History of the American Missionary Association, 23-29;* Johnson, "AMA," 52 – 53; *Richardson, Christian Reconstruction*, 263; Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*, 64-96.

Island on August 26, 1839, and Cinque with a group of the Mendians went ashore for the purpose of replenishing the schooner's supply of fresh water and provisions.[57]

Meanwhile, rumors of the phantom ship had received publicity in the American press. While Cinque and his companions were on shore, the Amistad was sighted by the United States naval brig Washington, which was patrolling the coast under the command of Lieutenant Thomas R Gedney. Going aboard to investigate, Lieutenant Gedney found Ruiz and Montez bound in the hold, and from them heard the story of the mutiny. Gedney immediately seized and disarmed the blacks and took them and the Amistad into port at New London, Connecticut, where he claimed the schooner, its cargo, and the Mendians for salvage. Montez and Ruiz filed a counterclaim for their slave property, and charged the adult males with murder and piracy. Later, acting on the part of his government, the Spanish minister, Calderon de las Barca, demanded that the Amistad be released, and that the cargo, including the Mendians, be returned to the Cuban owners. Consequently, the status of the Mendians became not only the cause of litigation in the American courts that lasted for over a year, but also the subject of long and delicate discussions between the United States and Spain. The diplomatic and legal aspects

[57] Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*, 64-70; DeBoer, Be Jubilant My Feet, 25-26; Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation*, 7; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles*, 3-4.

of this case are outside the scope of this study, but its influence on the development of the free missions movement is pertinent.[58]

At a meeting of the "friends of liberty," held in New York City in September, 1839, Lewis Tappan, Simeon Smith Jocelyn, and Joshua Leavitt volunteered to serve as a committee on behalf of the Amistad captives. The committee appealed to the public for funds, which were to be expended on fighting for the liberation of the Negroes and providing them with clothing and other necessities. Roger Sherman Baldwin offered his legal services to the Committee, and he headed an able legal staff in defending Mendians against the claims of Ruiz and Montez and of the Spanish government in the United States district and circuit courts. John Quincy Adams was persuaded to join Baldwin in presenting the case to the United States Supreme Court. The decision of that body was delivered March 9, 1841, in an opinion written by Justice Joseph Story. It declared that the Mendians were free and were to "be dismissed from the custody of this Court, and go without delay." But where were the liberated people to go? The efforts of Adams and Baldwin to secure a vessel from the United States government for transporting

[58] Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*, 96-120; DeBoer, Be Jubilant My Feet, 26-27; Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation*, 7-11 ; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles*, 4-7.

them back to Africa were unsuccessful. Consequently, the responsibility of providing for the future welfare of these people fell to the abolitionists who had managed their defense.[59]

Rumors about the fate of Amistad's captain, crew and its cargo were circulated by the American press. While Cinque and his companions were on shore, the Amistad was sighted by the United States naval brig Washington, which was patrolling the coast under the command of Lieutenant Thomas R Gedney. While investigating the ship during Cinque's absence, Lieutenant Gedney discovered Ruiz and Montez bound in the hold, and learned of the ship's mutiny. Gedney immediately seized and disarmed the blacks and took them and the Amistad into port at New London, Connecticut, where he claimed the schooner, its cargo, and the Mendians for salvage. Montez and Ruiz filed a counterclaim for their slave property, and charged the adult males with murder and piracy. As a representative of the Spanish government, Calderon de las Barca, a Spanish minister demanded that the Amistad be released, and that the cargo, including the Mendians, be returned to Ruiz and Montez. Given the differing points of view between the United States and Spain regarding the enslavement of the Mendians, the status of the Mendians became a protracted legal battle which waged for more than a year in the American courts. The diplomatic and legal aspects of this case are outside the scope of this study,

[59] Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*, 96-120; DeBoer, Be Jubilant My Feet, 26-27; Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation*, 7-11 ; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles*, 4-7.

however, its influence on the development of the free missions movement is pertinent.[60] This case served as a founding principle of the American Missionary Association.

In September, 1839 in New York City, Lewis Tappan, Simeon Smith Jocelyn, and Joshua Leavitt volunteered to serve as a committee known as "friends of liberty," to aid and assist the Amistad captives. The committee's purpose was to fundraise for the benefit of the captives, to fight for their freedom and provide them with clothing and essential items. Roger Sherman Baldwin and a highly competent legal staff offered their legal services to the Committee, in order to defend the Mendians against claims made by Ruiz and Montez and of the Spanish government in the United States district and circuit courts. John Quincy Adams joined Baldwin in presenting the case to the United States Supreme Court. The decision of that body was delivered March 9, 1841, in an opinion written by Justice Joseph Story. The decision stated that the Mendians were free and were to "be dismissed from the custody of this Court, and go without delay." But where were the liberated people to go? Despite efforts by Adams and Baldwin to secure a vessel from the United States government for transporting the Mendians back to Africa, their attempts were unsuccessful. Consequently, the responsibility of providing

[60] Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*, 96-120; DeBoer, Be Jubilant My Feet, 26-27; Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation*, 7-11 ; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles*, 4-7.

for the future welfare of these people fell to the abolitionists who had managed their defense.[61]

As the displaced Mendians awaited passage to their homeland, teachers employed by the Amistad Committee taught them to read and write. They received instruction in the fundamentals of the Christian religion; however, they were by no means prepared for gaining a livelihood in the United States. Most of them earnestly and anxiously desired to return to their homeland. The Committee agreed with the Mendians that the wisest and kindest thing to do was to send them to Africa. Though the Committee agreed, the agreement was not without stipulations. They wanted the Mendians to agree to remain in the United States for at least another year, so that they might be more thoroughly educated and prepared for "rendering essential service to their countrymen and of opening an effectual door for the introduction of civilization and Christianity into that long and neglected and darkened land."[62]

The Mendians, resisted attempts to detain them and begged to be sent home immediately. The Committee decided that if the Mendian were to return home, they must be

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[61] Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*, 96-120; DeBoer, Be Jubilant My Feet, 26-27; Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation*, 7-11 ; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles*, 4-7.

[62] Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*, 122-145; Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation*, 8 ; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles*, 7-8.

accompanied by missionaries, who would establish a mission station among the Mendi people. Futhermore, the Committee decided that the mission station be based on non-sectarian and abolitionist principles, since "the funds had been contributed by persons of various denominations, most of whom were anti-slavery principles." It was also recognized that the return of the Mendians to their native land presented an opportunity to strike a blow for the free missions cause. On the grounds that the Amistad Committee, having no formal organization and being composed only of volunteers, was not in a position to assume the permanent supervision and support of the mission, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was suggested as the society best equipped to undertake the project. The Board's prudential committee was therefore approached with the proposition that it accept the remainder of the defense funds and expand them in transporting the Mendians to Africa and in establishing a missionary post under its supervision. In 1841, this proposition was rejected by the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioner for Foreign Missions which composed the following resolution: "That it would be contrary to the feelings and principles of a large majority of the donors to the Amistad Fund, and of the friends of the liberated Africans, to connect their return with any Missionary Society that solicits or receives donations from slaveholders."[63]

The Committee raised additional funds, and on November 18, 1841, the thirty-five surviving Mendians, accompanied by five missionaries and teachers, sailed from New York to

[63] *American Missionary Magazine*, II (July, 1858), 189; DeBoer, Be Jubilant My Feet, 29;

Sierra Leone. The committee committed itself to support the missionaries until they could align with other benefactors. In the meantime, a free missions society developed in Hartford, Connecticut from further discussions regarding the Amistad case.[67]

On May 5, 1841, the Reverend James W. C. Pennington, a fugitive slave and pastor of the First Colored Congregational Church of Hartford, called his congregation together to discuss "the obligations of Christians--colored Christians--to do something in relation to carrying the gospel to Africa." Pennington's call to action resulted in the creation of a general convention on missions to Africa, which met in Hartford in August 18, 1841. This convention, composed of forty-three persons, "chiefly and people of color," including five of the Amistad victims and representatives from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania, established the Union Missionaries Society. The character of the new organization is indicated by its announced aim "to discountenance slavery, and especially by refusing to receive the known fruits of unrequited labor." In addition to promoting African missions, the Union Missionary Society proposed to encourage the evangelization of "those in this country who are

[67] Rediker, *The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom*, 215-224; Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation*, 13; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles*, 9. There appears to be a difference of opinion of when the missionaries and Mendians casted off. I have chosen the date that is congruent with sailing manifests which is set sail in the morning; See Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom: The American Missionary Association's Bold Campaign to Educate Minds, Open Hearts, and Heal the Soul of a Divided Nation*, 13; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association: Its Constitution and Principles*, 9; and Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery*, 220.

prohibited by law from learning to read, and are thus deprived of the privilege of searching the scriptures."[68]

Under the presidency and leadership of The Reverend Mr. Pennington, the Union Missionaries Society helped to support the Mendi mission from its beginning and soon merged with the originally formed Armisted Committee. The merger was accomplished by the society making some changes in its constitution, and moving its offices to New York City. The Amistad Committee was absorbed in September, 1842. Other officers of the society included, Reverend Amos G. Beman, corresponding secretary; the Reverend Theodore S. Wright, treasurer; Ichabod Codding, chairman of the board of managers; and the Reverend Josiah Brewer, chairman of the executive committee. Lewis Tappan became its treasurer and corresponding secretary, and the number of geographical representation of the officers were enlarged. The Union Missionary Society supported the Mendi mission and contributed some support to missionary activities among the blacks of New York City and in Canada.[69]

The Western Reserve Congregational Association was the second free missions society founded during this period. Frederick Ayer, a missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions among the Ojibway Indians of Minnesota, visited Oberlin

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[68] Joyce Hollyday, *On the Heels of Freedom*, 16-18; Tappan, *History of the American Misssionary Association*, 10-11; DeBoer, *Be Jubilant My Feet*, 38-44.

[69] Ibid.

College in 1842. Ayer presented the urgent demands of his field, and called on some of the pious graduates of Oberlin to seize the opportunity to do God's work. The plea was favorably received by the Oberlin students, and more than twenty of them offered their services to the American Board for work among the Ojibways. They were all refused commissions, however, chiefly because of the objections of the Board to the theology taught at Oberlin.[72]

During the annual meeting of the Western Reserve Association held in Akron, Ohio in June 14-15, 1843, some of the determined students asked the Association to provide the means for supporting missionary work among the Indians. The Association proceeded to adopt a constitution and to organize the Western Evangelical Missionary Society. This Society, which was to be “in correspondence with the Union Missionaries Society," aimed "to prosecute missionary operations among the western Indians, and in other parts of the world, as God in his providence shall open the way and provide the means." Article VII of the constitution stated: “The Society shall not solicit or knowingly receive the wages of oppression, especially the price of the bodies and souls of men, for the prosecution of the work of the Lord."[73]

The newly formed Western Evangelical Missionaries Society was made up predominantly by members of the Oberlin community. Frances D. Parish, a Sandusky lawyer, and a trustee of Oberlin, was chosen president of the Society. Nine of the ten members of its executive committee, including the chairman, George Whipple, were members of the Oberlin

[72] Beard, *A Crusade of Brotherhood,* 65-93.

[73] Ibid., *1-33*; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association*, 11-13.

faculty. The missionaries came almost exclusively from Oberlin. July 26, 1843, the executive committee commission eight men and women and they departed for work among the Ojibways. During the following year, nine reinforcements were sent out by the Society. Six of the missionaries received appointments and support from the United States government, but the others, and the mission stations that they established, were supported entirely by the new organization.[74]

Committee of West Indian Missions was organized in 1844 to support a mission among the freed people of Jamaica. Five Congregational families, ministers and their wives who were all former students at Oberlin moved to Jamaica in 1839 with the expressed intention of engaging in missionary labor and receiving their entire support from the freed people whom they would serve. The ministers were soon supervising five mission stations in the vicinity of Kingston, four of which they had established, but they were disappointed in their expectations of receiving support from the local inhabitants. Consequently, these men and women were reduced to distressing circumstances, and forced to anticipate giving up the work for which there appeared to be such great need. There was no agency in the United States at the time to which they could appeal for support. The American Board not only objected to their theological views, but that the organization also restricted its missionary operations to work among unevangelized peoples. The blacks of Jamaica did not fall into this classification since they had been introduced to the Christian religion while in slavery. Abolitionists in the United States

[74] Johnson, "AMA", 61.

were greatly interested in this success of the West Indian experiment in emancipation, and were concerned about the moral development of the freedpeople. Hence, when the plight of the Jamaican Mission was brought to his attention in 1843, Amos Augustus Phelps immediately began a movement for the establishment of a committee for their support.[75]

Early in 1844, the West Indian Missionary Committee issued a pamphlet from Boston, entitled, *An Appeal to the Churches in Behalf of the West Indian Missions*. Although this Committee was anti-slavery in sentiment, it was not strictly a free missions agency. The Committee had been established separately from the Union Missionaries Society in the hope that many would contribute to the support of the Jamaica Mission, who, because of the opposition of the American Board, would not contribute to the Union Missionaries Society. Furthermore, some persons who joined the Committee had done so on the condition that it should not take an antagonistic attitude towards the American Board.[79]

Each of the above agencies had been established to supply a specific need, and no one of them was large enough to attract general attention and win wide support. Many of their supporters, as some of the officers, remained loyal to the colder missionary societies. Furthermore, the free missions movement in 1844 was essentially an effort to reform the benevolent societies by agitation within their ranks. Of the three new agencies, only the

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[75] Ibid, 61.

[79] Ibid, 61-62; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association*, 13 - 17.

Western Evangelical Missionaries Society was designed with the idea of having a long or permanent existence. Its appeal was confined almost exclusively to the churches affiliated with the Western Reserve Association, and its officers maintained that its purpose was not “to batter down or undermine" other missionary societies. The Society’s appeal for support was based chiefly on the grounds that its locality gave it “peculiar facilities for sustaining missions" among the Indians of the Northwest, and that it would feel no religious scruples in appointing missionaries who believed in “the present attainability of entire sanctification" The nature of the Committee for West Indian Missions was by no means such as to promise a permanent existence, ended expressed no opposition to existing missionary societies. The Union Missionaries Society had a formal organization, but it was popularly regarded as simply the “Mendi Society," and even its founders considered it no more than a “temporary arrangement" to meet the special needs until the time when the American Board should adopt practices that were distinctly anti-slavery. Consolidation of the three bodies would have definite advantages, but there was no proposal for such a union until after the annual meeting of the American Board in 1845. The admission of slaveholders to mission church is by that body a fresh impetus to the free missions movement, and convinced many fateful supporters of the Board that the time had come when secession and reorganization on free mission principles were demanded of Christian abolitionists.[80]

[80] Beard, *A Crusade of Brotherhood,* 20-33.

The American Board continued to be agitated by members who questioned the admission of slaveholders in the mission churches. Members further wanted to know the Board's connection with slavery through honorary and corporate members and its willingness to accept contributions that were the fruits of slave labor. One group of members submitted a memorial, or petition, at the annual meeting at Worcester, Massachusetts in 1844 stating: "Your memorialists are informed that slavery is actually tolerated in the churches under the patronage of the Board among the Choctaws and other Indian tribes, by the admission of slaveholding members." Members of the Board responded by agreeing to study the validity of the statement and potentially holding the missionaries in violation or neglect of their duties. Abolitionists viewed the board's actions as an attempt to stall and allow the pressure from the activist body to subside. Besides, they knew the statement to be true since the new messenger of slavery among the Choctaws was a Choctaw missionary.[81]

During the following year, 1845, the abolitionists applied more pressure to keep the issue before the public. Editors of newspapers printed strong missives that warned of the Board propagating a slaveholding Christianity. Congregationalists and Presbyterians meeting in in Chicago, Illinois, resolved that the pro-slavery attitude of the missionary boards would alienate churches in the North-West, forcing them to seek other missionary organizations. Abolitionists, led by the radical Augustus Phelps, pressed even harder with specific inquiries to the prudential committee. These officers were asked to give the precise position of the Board

[81] Johnson, "AMA," 70.

on the election of slaveholders as corporate and honorary members, the solicitation of funds in the South, the employment of slaveholders as missionaries, and fellowshipping the owners of slaves in mission churches.

Abolitionists found the Board's evasive lack of a response to their questions unsatisfactory. However, the benevolent activists soon had the answers they needed. At a meeting held in Brooklyn, New York in that same year, the American Board issued an elaborate report known as the "Brooklyn Report," which revealed that there were 15 slaveholders and 21 slaves in the Cherokee mission churches, and 20 slaveholders and 131 slaves in the churches of the Choctaw mission. The report additionally stated that the missionaries gave no special instruction on slavery or the duties of masters to their slaves, fearing that it "would seem to be personal" to the slaveholding members if the subject were given a "peculiar prominence." It was the recommendation of the committee that no action be taken by the Board on the matters of fellowshipping slaveholders or disciplining church members, but urged that these matters be left entirely to the discretion of the missionaries.

The abolitionists were infuriated by the double-edge message that the report conveyed. On one hand, the Board denounced the institution of slavery as unrighteous and unchristian, and stated that it exerted "disastrous moral and social influences "upon the" less enlightened and less civilized communities where the missionaries of this board are laboring." On the other hand, the committee stated: "The effect of the introduction of Christian knowledge among these Indians, so far as masters and slaves have come under their instruction, has, in the

opinion of the missionaries, been highly beneficial, in respect to the character and conduct of both.[82]

Because of the perceived acceptance of slaveholding in the western mission, the free missions movement gained new prominence. The AFASS had always stood down in the fight with the American Board. Many of the members chose to act independently rather than act in consort with each other. Even before the Brooklyn meeting the AFASS said that it wanted to "avoid all seeming, and much more real collision with any of those great religious and benevolent associations of the country, which, in common with our own, and by varied forms of effort, seek, as their ultimate end, the glory of God in the salvation and welfare of man." Some charged that members of AFASS were more critical because of its diminishing membership and that attacks on the great benevolent societies, namely the American Board, only interfered with its plans of greatness. Lewis Tappan, one of the leaders of AFASS, described the anti-slavery movement in this country in 1844 as a movement with "little vigor," especially when considering Garrison and his band of Quakers, "infidels, Universalists, Unitarians, worldly men of all sorts," as he called them. Tappan concluded that the anti-slavery cause could not be carried to a successful conclusion "unless the Christians of this land can be enlisted in the enterprise."[83] Tappan remained optimistic about the free missions movement. Thinking it was difficult to be a Christian and not be an abolitionist during the 1840s, he described the

[82]Ibid., 71.

[83] Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery*, 248.

movement as an effort to rally the "friends of an unadulterated gospel….to rescue Christianity from perversion, and save the missionary cause from ruin."[84]

The Christian abolitionists, formally coalesced under AFASS, presented new polemics to the American Board that further divided the two societies. They declared that the Board had not taken a position on many of the social evils that were directly linked to its reform efforts in the past and not only had not taken a stand on slavery but had repudiated its past support for other reform movements in the United States. More formally, the abolitionists critically assessed the Board's positions on sin - intemperance, licentiousness, Indian oppression, polygamy, idolatry, and caste. They claimed the American Board not only sanctioned American slavery, but also tolerated idolatry, caste and polygamy in its mission churches. Here the agenda of the free missions movement broadened into a campaign to free the missionary enterprise from a connection with all social sins.[85]

The AFASS rallied fellow abolitionists under the "double policy of re-organization without, and re-agitation and remonstrance within." Like-minded manumissionists felt the need to convene a free missions convention. Advertised as the "Friends of Bible Missions in the State of New York," the first meeting was held at the Congregational Church of Syracuse, New York in 1846 with more than 110 individuals from throughout the state in attendance. The reasons for calling the convention: Slaveholders in the churches who were planted and

[84] Lewis Tappan, *Life of Arthur Tappan* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1870), 328.

[85] *The American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter,* January 1846, 93.

sustained by the American Board and approved, welcomed, and undisciplined among the regular members; caste, polygamy, and other social wrongs were allowed, admitted, and sanctioned. The purpose of the convention was to remonstrate against the practices of the Board, and consider "such practical measures as may seem best to give practical effect to the same."[87]

The principal address restated the grievances against the American Board, criticizing it for tolerating slavery, polygamy, caste, and idolatry and called upon its officers and supporters to inquire "whether the Christianity they are sending from land to land is not loaded with fatal disparagement, such as forbids its wide extension!" Terms to describe the Board that were used included "corruption", "despotic", "closed corporation", "self-perpetuation in membership", "accountable to no ecclesiastical body of any other power", and "honorary members having no vote or voice in it management".[88]

The highlight of the convention came when a letter from Lewis Tappan, as a member of the Union Missionary Association, advocated a clean break with the American Board. He proposed that either the Society (Union Missionary) be adopted as the agency for the free missions enterprise, and enlarged to embrace an elaborate system of home and foreign

[87] For the announcement of the meeting, Ibid., 96.

[88] Ibid, 94.

missions, or that another society be organized, "founded on such principles as will enlist the confidence, aid, and prayers of all anti-slavery Christians in the world."[89]

There were mixed emotions around the spirit of secession. Those who took an aggressive view of separation from the Board asked the moderates to be more sober in their assessment of the Board's actions and practices, especially "respecting polygamy, caste, oppression, slavery, idolatry and all the various sin peculiar to their respective fields." Many of those who were leaders in the movement, among them Gerrit Smith, William Goodell, Amos Augustus Phelps, Lewis Tappan, and Marshall S. Scudder, formed a committee to call another convention to meet later in the year to consider the best method of secession. [90]

On September 2nd and 3rd of 1846 at the behest of the previously mentioned leadership, The "Second Convention for Bible Missions" convened in a Baptist church at State Street in Albany, New York. Although this convention had a considerably smaller attendance, with fifty-two members, there was a broader representation of New York residents than in the previous one. Others who had gathered hailed from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois. There were also representatives from the Union Missionaries Society, the Western Evangelical Missionaries Society, and the Committee for West Indian Missions included as attendees. The group elected officers: Rev. Joseph Hitchcock Payne of Half Day, Illinois, president; the Rev. Theodore Sedgewick Wright of New York and William

[89] *The Proceedings of the Convention for Bible Missions Held in Syracuse, February 18th and 19th, 1846* (Syracuse; Kinney, Marsh & Barnes, 1846), 18; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association*, 17.

[90] Ibid.

Jackson of Massachusetts, vice presidents; the Rev. James W.C. Pennington of Connecticut and the Rev. John H. Byrd Ohio, secretaries.[91]

The Second Bible Convention was characterized as having a spirit of "harmony" and "unanimity" among the gathering. Since the majority represented the radical faction of the abolitionist movement, they were not inhibited by moderates in the founding of a new society at Syracuse. Focusing on the undemocratic work of the American Board in its toleration of idolatry, caste, and polygamy and its refusal to endorse the popular reform movements of the day, the members of the Second Bible Convention criticized the American Board and American Home Missionary Society for adopting a policy that neglected destitute peoples at home and abroad. Those in attendance at the convention concurred that the time had come for the formation of a new organization that could make broader and lasting change to meet the needs of a greater society in addition to the continuation of anti-slavery activism.[92]

The constitution for the founding of the American Missionary Association (AMA) was unanimously adopted, creating an association to conduct home and foreign missionary activities. According to article eight of the constitution: "This society, in collecting funds, in appointing officers, agents, and missionaries, and in selecting fields of labor, and conducting the missionary work, will endeavor particularly to discountenance slavery, by refusing to

[91] Ibid., 87.

[92] *Proceedings of the Second Convention for Bible Missions, Held in Albany September Second and Third, MDCCCXLVI: With the Address of the Executive Committee of the American Missionary Association* (New York: J.H. Tobitt, 1846); Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association*, 20.

receive the known fruits of unrequited labor, or to welcome to its employment those who hold their fellow beings as slaves." Other statements at the founding of the AMA proclaimed that the end of slavery would be vigorously pursued along with other social sins.[93]

The Association received a charter from the state of New York in 1849, and located its home office in New York City. Divided among the four leading organizations attending, board elections completed the convention with eight officers from the AFASS, twelve from the Union Missionary Society, two from the Western Evangelical Missionary Society, and three members of the Committee for West Indian Missions. [94]

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[93] Ibid, 88; The principles of the American Missionary Association were: That conversion, new birth, or regeneration, which entitles to Christian fellowship and church membership, we conceive to be a 'great moral transformation,' in which sinners of every description 'break off their sins by righteousness in heart and life, and no longer indulge in them.... We therefore account it a perversion of Christian institutions, to receive into the churches, without' 'fruits meet for repentance,' the proud Brahmin, remaining proud, and refusing to embrace fraternally the man of low caste--the oppressive ruler, still remaining oppressive, and not dispensing justice to the subject, the polygamist refusing to conform his life to a the law of Christian chastity, and the slave master refusing to the desist from his 'violation of the natural rights of man,' by 'breaking the bonds of the slave.' And the practice of receiving such flagrant, habitual, and determined transgressions into the churches, under the idea that they are converted, while refusing to abandon their cherished and darling sins, and with the vain hope that the privileges of church membership and the special ordinance of the gospel—the baptisms and the sacraments--will work 'the great moral transformation afterwards, we hold to be a glaring departure from the principles and the usage of evangelical Christians, tending to foster the grossest dilutions, and involving some of the worst elements of the superstitions and corruptions of Romanism itself. See *Proceedings of the Second Convention for Bible Missions, Held in Albany September Second and Third, MDCCCXLVI: With the Address of the Executive Committee of the American Missionary Association* (New York: J.H. Tobitt, 1846); *American Missionary*, I (October, 1846), 2; Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association*, 20-23.

[94] The first officers of the AMA were: William Jackson, president; Theodore Sedgwick Wright, Francis D. Parish, Charles Dexter Cleveland, David Thurston, and Samuel Ringgold Ward, vice presidents; Simeon Smith Jocelyn, recording secretary; Lewis Tappan, treasurer; and Arthur Tappan, Theodore Sedgwick Wright, Simeon Smith Jocelyn, Amos Augustus Phelps, Charles B. Ray, J.R. Johnson, Samuel E. Cornish, William H. Pillow, William E. Whiting, James W.C. Pennington, Josiah Brewer, and Edward Weed, members of the executive committee. The important office of corresponding secretary was not filled at Albany, and the executive committee immediately selected George Whipple for the position. See *American Missionary,* I (October, 1846), 1.

The AMA executive offices moved into the rooms of the AFASS, and the two organizations shared offices throughout the antebellum period. The Union Missionary Society immediately folded into the Association and was disbanded. The Committee for West Indian Missions also surrendered its obligations, and an agreement was made with the missionaries in 1847 by which the Jamaican Mission came under the supervision of the Association. The Western Evangelical Missionary Association first became the auxiliary of the new organization, but was absorbed in 1848.[95]

With the reorganization and clarification of its purpose, the newly formed AMA was ready to act upon a broad foreign mission field right from its inception. The missions in Jamaica, among the Ojibway Indians, and in Africa were strengthened and added to in the following years. The home missions department developed more slowly during the early years, but assumed greater significance after 1850 and rapidly expanded. Home missionaries were supported and Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, New Mexico, Kentucky, and the District of Columbia, and North Carolina, with the largest concentrations in Ohio and Illinois in the west and in Kentucky in the South.

The American Missionary Association was established as an independent, non-sectarian, and non-ecclesiastical organization. Membership was open to any contributor to its funds, who was a professing Christian of evangelical sentiments, and who was not a slaveholder, "or in the

[95] Ibid, 5.

practice of other immoralities." Seemingly republican in its outlook, the Association was open and democratic in its functioning. The annual meeting, which consisted of the officers and members of the society and one delegate from each cooperating organization, was the primary governing body. It elected all officers, reviewed the activities of the missionaries and policies of the executive officers, and had the power to amend the constitution by two-thirds vote and transact any other business deemed necessary by the majority of those present.[96]

The Association directly or indirectly endorsed most of the popular reform movements of the day, but there was a difference of opinion among the members on the participation of women in the annual meeting. Although there were a few who had been converted to the idea of women speaking amongst men, the AMA leadership reverted to the days of early abolitionism and did not let them speak in the annual meeting.[97]

The newly formed AMA consisted of the following leadership offices: president, vice-presidents, a recording secretary, corresponding secretaries, a treasurer, two auditors, and an executive committee of twelve with the corresponding secretaries, treasurer, and executive committee. The recording secretary, always a member of the executive committee, served as secretary for the annual meeting and meetings of the executive committee. The auditors were also selected above the membership of the executive committee. The presidency and vice-presidencies were largely honorary offices. Presiding over the annual meeting was the only

[96]From the Constitution as featured in the *American Missionary,* October, 1846, 1.

[97] Ibid.

official function of the president, and in his absence one of the vice presidents assumed the function. Three considerations were important in the selection of the presidents and vice presidents. First, the positions were regarded as a means of honoring individuals for their devoted service to the missionary and anti-slavery causes in general and the Association in particular. Second, these officers presented the only opportunity for drawing representation among the officers from the different sections of the country, since the executive and administrative officers, by necessity, had to reside in New York City and vicinity. Third, and most importantly, the officers must men of prestige and influence were chosen for the positions in an effort to enhance the Association's reputation and increased support.[98]

The AMA presidential profile was that of a particular type of leader. He was a northerner, who was involved in the early free missions movement; he held a stake in capitalist enterprises like railroads, steamboats, real estate, and banks; he was well-connected to politicians, clergy, or attorneys; he was connected to the free soil movement; and a member of the Congregational church who attended revivals and was committed to reform (e.g. temperance).

Most of the officers were reelected year after year. There was one president, seven vice presidents; twelve members of the executive committee, two auditors, and one recording secretary making a total of twenty three offices that were filled by forty-four men in the fifteen years immediately preceding the Civil War. Replacements were seldom made except to fill

[98] Ibid.

vacancies created by voluntary resignations and deaths. The officers were drawn from both the laity and the ministry with representatives of the latter predominating. Most of them were Congregational, but Presbyterians were also well represented. Among the businessmen were Arthur Tappan, William Jackson, Lawrence Brainard, and Edward Dwight Holton. The legal profession was represented by Frances D. Parish of Sandusky, Ohio, the former chairman of the board of managers of the Western Evangelical Missionary Society and the trustee of Oberlin College. Two distinguish educators were included. Jonathan Blanchard was president of Knox College in Illinois from 1845 to 1857 one of the founders of Wheaton College and in 1860 became its first president. Charles Dexter Cleveland was a professor of Latin in Philadelphia, having formally taught at Dickinson College and the University of the City of New York. He continued to hold office of vice president after his appointment as United States consul to Cardiff, Wales, in 1861. William Jackson and Lawrence Brainerd were also bankers, railroad promoters, and active politicians. William Harned and William E. Whiting were employed by the AMA as office agents and assistants to the treasurer. Prominent black representatives were Samuel Ringgold Ward, Theodore Sedgwick Wright, Samuel E. Cornish, Charles B. Ray, Henry Highland Garnet, and James W. C. Pennington.[99]

The executive committee was concerned with policymaking. It met monthly in New York City; five members constituted a quorum. After review of the record, it is significant that there

[99] DeBoer, *Be Jubilant My*, 55-57 (Ward), 52-53 (Wright), 54 (Cornish), 42, 50-51 (Ray), 51, 56, 60-68 (Garnet), 30, 51 (Pennington).

was never an instance during the period of this study of the reversal of a decision, or censure of the executive committee by the annual meeting. The most important members of the committee were the corresponding secretaries and the treasurer. Not only did they have the responsibility for the execution of policies, but the committee depended upon them for information in making decisions. Furthermore, the importance of the offices was enhanced by the character and dedication of the incumbents.[100]

Originally, George Whipple was named corresponding secretary by the executive committee in 1846, and was reelected each year for a period totaling thirty years by the annual meetings until his death in 1876. When provision was made for a secretary of the home department in 1853, Whipple became the secretary for foreign missions. Born in Albany, New York, in 1805, he studied at Oneida Institute and then at Lane Seminary. As one of the rebels who left Lane for Oberlin College, he studied theology under Charles Grandison Finney and John Morgan. He was ordained after his graduation in 1836, but never became a parish minister. After a short period as principal of the preparatory department, he was appointed professor of mathematics at Oberlin in 1838, and continued in that position until 1846. He was also a standing member of the prudential committee and had charge of the business affairs of the college. As a student, Whipple devoted his vacations to anti-slavery agitation, and he was

[100] *American Missionary*, October, 1846, 1.

later one of the founders and the chairman of the executive committee of the Western Evangelical Missionaries Society.[101]

Whipple assumed the responsibilities of corresponding secretary with a spirit of dedication, faithfulness, and self sacrifice, despite the fact that the position offered a small salary. In addition to his executive duties, Whipple was the chief editor of the *American Missionary*; and in response to frequent requests from the missionaries he gave his attention to their various business and family interest in the United States. The position which Whipple held required a great deal responsibility too much for one person to handle, but he refused to get additional support because of the limited resources of the Association. His colleagues reported that he was frequently at his desk at four or five o'clock in the morning, after having worked most of the previous night and slept for only two or three hours on a table in the office. He had a strict concept of personal piety and was inflexible in his conduct. He was influenced little by emotions in making decisions, but he demonstrated respect for the rights and opinions of others, and was not hasty in his judgments. On the contrary, his patience in his relations with the missionaries appears to have been unending. The foreign missions were repeatedly torn by internal dissensions, occasionally of a very serious nature but most often in the form of petty conflicts resulting from personality differences among the missionaries. Next to piety (professed, at least), the most common traits among the missionaries were a spirit of self-justification and a readiness to find weakness and faults in their fellow laborers. Consequently,

[101] Johnson, "AMA," 107.

Whipple received a constant flood of letters voicing complaints; and all the writers expected him to resolve the difficulties to their satisfaction. It is strong testimony of his devotion to the missionary cause that Whipple did not become completely discouraged; and it is indicative of his judicial mind that he usually settled the disputes without losing esteem of the missionaries, even those whom he had censured.[102]

In 1853, Simeon Smith Jocelyn was named secretary for the home department. After having served on the executive committee and as recording secretary for eight years because of the state of his health and increased duties of the office, he resigned as home secretary in 1863 but continued as a member of the executive committee until his death in 1879. Jocelyn was born in New Haven Connecticut in 1799. He began his ministerial career as pastor of a black Congregational Church in that city. In 1829, with the support of Arthur Tappan, he attempted to organize the national college for blacks in New Haven, but the venture ended as a result of opposition from the city council and mayor. Thereafter he was closely associated with Arthur and Lewis Tappan in the anti-slavery movement, and served as officer of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and as chairman of the Amistad Committee. He was also an officer of the Union Missionaries Society and a member of the convention that established the AMA.[103]

Being an administrator was not Jocelyn's greatest strength given his gentle disposition and tender sympathies. For example, he was inclined to offer only mild criticism for

[102] Ibid., 108.

[103] Ibid., 110-111.

misconduct by the missionaries, even when the occasion demanded severe censure and perhaps dismissal. He was a man of deep piety. William Lloyd Garrison, who disagreed with his methods, is reported to have said that Jocelyn was “full of heavenly mindedness." Nevertheless, he was a man of great moral courage and never neglected the opportunity to do battle for the slave. At the time of Jocelyn’s death, Edward Beecher said, "In simplicity in godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." His deficiencies as an administrator were compensated for by his conscientious devotion to duty. He wrote hundreds of long letters of encouragement to the missionaries each month, and those men regarded "Father Jocelyn" with universal love and esteem. The Western missionaries felt no hesitation in adding to his heavy responsibilities by frequently calling upon him to purchase for them and their wards insurance, spectacles, medicines, clothes, books, newspaper and magazine subscriptions, furniture, musical instruments, sewing machines, and other articles.[104]

Arthur and Lewis Tappan were the most famous of the seven notable Tappan brothers from Northampton, Massachusetts. They were partners in both the abolition movement and business, and made large fortunes as silk merchants in New York City. Most of their wealth was expanded during their life in the promotion of reform and benevolent enterprises. Closely associated with Charles Grandison Finney and Theodore Dwight Weld, they had been the chief patrons of Lane Seminary in Ohio, and transferred their generous support to Oberlin College

[104] Ibid., 111.

after the Lane abolitionist rebels enrolled at that institution. They had also had been prominent in the formation and leadership of the American Anti-Slavery Society, but led the secession from that body when the Garrison group associated other issues such as women's rights with the anti-slavery cause and adopted anti-church policies and non-evangelical views. Lewis Tappan was instrumental in the formation of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and Arthur became its president.[105]

Lewis, born in 1788, was two years younger than Arthur, and he is generally regarded as having played the less important role of the two in the abolition crusade; but he was by all means the most important officer of the American Missionary Association, and it is probable that more intensive study would reveal that his place in the anti-slavery movement as a whole was the more significant. As an original member of the Amistad Committee, and later the corresponding secretary of the Union Missionary Society and a member of the Committee for the West Indian Missions, he was one of the foremost advocates of the free missions cause, far in advance of most of his abolitionist friends in withdrawing support from the American Board. He took the lead in the formation of the AMA, he served as its treasurer for eighteen years from 1846. During most of that period, he received no financial remuneration, having resigned from active business to live on the income from his properties and devote his full time and energy to benevolence. This philosophy on benevolence and stewardship was expounded in two tracts, *Be Your Own Executor* and *Is It Right To Be Rich?*, which he wrote and circulated. His

[105]Ibid, 112.

thoroughness and shrewd business abilities made him an ideal treasurer for the Association, and he was largely responsible for its early growth and prosperity.[106]

Many of his contemporaries regarded Lewis Tappan as obsessed with one idea-the abolition of slavery, but the truth is that religion was the all-absorbing interests of his life and the motivation work was abolitionism. He was converted to evangelical Christianity by the preaching of Lyman Beecher after having been a Unitarian follower of William Ellery Channing in his youth. After his conversion, he wrote and published numerous tracts on the errors of Unitarianism. When an attempt was made in the organizing convention to open the membership of the AMA to Unitarians, Tappan led the majority group in insisting that the society the established on strict evangelical principles. He came under the influence of Finney in 1830, and was one of the most devoted disciples of the great evangelist.[107]

Despite his great zeal and enthusiasm, Lewis Tappan was dictatorial in manner and irascible in temper. He assumed that he was the first officer of the AMA, and undertook the supervision and direction of the work of the corresponding secretaries. While he generally respected Whipple's judgment and abilities, he regarded Jocelyn as too much the man of feeling, and frequently reproved both men for their carelessness in keeping accounts, and he gave instructions, or suggestions, for improving their office efficiency. He read and criticized Jocelyn's articles for the *American Missionary* and other writings in the manner of a pedagogue

[106] For a good biography of Lewis Tappan, see Bertrum Wyatt-Brown's, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969).

[107] Ibid.

with a student's composition. His most persistent and serious criticism was of the mildness of the secretaries in reprimanding the wrong-doing of the missionaries, and he often assumed the functions of corresponding secretary when he felt the occasion called for more severe action.

Although his rectitude cannot be questioned, Lewis Tappan was dictatorial in manner and irascible in temper. He assumed that he was the first officer of the AMA, and undertook the supervision and direction of the work of the corresponding secretaries. While he generally respected Whipple's judgment and abilities, he regarded Jocelyn as too much the man of feeling, and frequently reproved both men for their carelessness in keeping accounts, and he gave instructions, or suggestions, for improving their office efficiency. He read and criticized Jocelyn's articles for the *American Missionary* and other writings in the manner of a pedagogue with a student's composition. His most persistent and serious criticism was of the mildness of the secretaries in reprimanding the wrong-doing of the missionaries, and he often assumed the functions of corresponding secretary when he felt the occasion called for more severe action.[108]

In spite of Tappan's authoritarian manner, his relations with the corresponding secretaries remain harmonious. This resulted largely from the forbearance of Whipple and Jocelyn, and their appreciation of Tappan's dedication and contributions to the Association; but Tappan also had genuine affection and respect for the two men. He often apologized for his quick temper and interference in the work of their departments, and his letters to the

[108] Ibid.

missionaries were usually submitted for their approval. Tappan's relations with the missionaries were less happy, and he completely alienated many of them.[109]

The harmony between Whipple, Jocelyn, and Tappan epitomized the confidence the AMA exuded as it was committed to foreign and domestic mission work. Based on democratic principles, its strength came from the decisiveness of the vigorous and dedicated leaders. They were relentless Christian abolitionists whose polity reflected the convictions and philosophies of the founders.

[109] Ibid.

Chapter 3
The Wicked City: One Missionary's Futile Experiment in Assimilation

Ten years before the emancipation of slaves, the American Missionary Association (AMA) prepared for a great theological, educational, and social awakening in Washington, DC. Despite the law ridding the city of the slave trade in 1850, slavery remained and was continually paraded up and down the avenues. The social milieu reminded one clergyman, sent to Washington by the Association, of Jerusalem, when Nehemiah went to rebuild it. "Desolation reigned on every hand, a perverted gospel was proclaimed to some fifty thousand, and not a church could be found where buying and selling one another was considered a disciplinable offense," he reported. "Not far from our house of worship stood the dwelling of that prominent elder of the Presbyterian Church who spurned the prayers and tears of a broken-hearted mother," he continued, "and sold her daughter, a worthy and estimable church-member, to one of the harems of the far South--refusing to sell her in Washington at any price." To his astonishment, "after the facts were published throughout the land, the New School General Assembly met at Washington, and this same elder distributed the emblems of the body and blood of that Savior, whom he had, but a few months before, sold in the person of 'one of his little ones.'" Moved by the report of the "dry bones" found in the nation's Capital, the AMA unsuccessfully summoned the ailing Charles Grandison Finney to be its missionary who would stand in the midst of the impending apocalypse.[1]

[1] Johnson, "AMA," 533-534.

The Second Great Awakening was moment of continual influence. From the glorious ferment there came a proliferation of voluntary societies. Individual congregations and whole denominations were changed as new forms of social cohesion erected institutions within the context of westward migration, economic expansion, ecclesiastical disestablishment, and an ideology of social and political egalitarianism. The mobilization of like-minded groups around an Arminian or synergistic theology provided the vitality for social reorganization. The eschatological vision was the evangelical motivator for prolific and prototypical secular social work.[2]

The goal of the AMA as it entered Washington, DC at the outbreak of the Civil War was to purify the republic. Marching to the cadence of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic", Protestant Yankees descended on the city with entrenched ideals of Yankee Protestantism, American nationalism, republican virtue – free soil, free labor, free men, free mind (thinking), and middle class ideology. Carrying the providential banner emblazoned "God Is With Us," they were adamant about reforming American society – freedmen and freemen would be taught ways to surmount deplorable conditions, former masters could be cured of

[2] James H. Moorhead, "The Erosion of Postmillennialism In American Religious Thought, 1865-1925," *Church History* 53 (March 1984): 73-75; While Lyman Beecher spread the New Haven Theology throughout New England, Presbyterian evangelist Charles Finney went even further in reshaping traditional Calvinism. Whereas the New Haven theologians sought to save Calvinism and adapted Methodist techniques and doctrine to a formalist audience. In accepting the Methodist position that humans were free to accept the grace of God, Finney discarded the doctrine of the election altogether. Finney believed that human beings, not God, had the final word on whether they would spend eternity in heaven or hell. In portraying this decision for his audience, Finney used the most powerful democratic imagery at his disposal-the American political election. "The world is divided into two great political parties," the argued. "The difference between them is that one party choose Satan as the God of this world [and] the other party choose Jehovah for their governor." Each individual had a choice, and salvation came when sinners decided to yield their lives to God, thus joining Jehovah's party. Election still was a key term in the language of conversion; but in Finney's view, individual sinners, not God, cast the crucial ballot which determined salvation or damnation. See Curtis D. Johnson, *Redeeming America: Evangelicals and the Road to Civil War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993), 59-60; and ed. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th ed., 653 – 655.

licentiousness and sloth, and unsympathetic Yankee friends needed to be cured of apathy and insensitivity.[3]

The social dexterity of officers, superintendents, teachers, and missionaries allowed them to be leading players among the visionaries of slavery, abolition, and reconstruction to develop a loyal citizenry who became committed to the cause of the liberation of African Americans. Yet freedom meant rigorous discipline and super-human effort, enforced conformity, and the promise of a sacred polity. With an abiding faith in Providence – judgment and renovation of a just and punishing God, the warts of social radicalism began to shine through as middle class hegemony raised more questions than answers.[4]

The District of Columbia - a place that maintained the outlook and manners of the South, where a large free black population was not welcomed, the location where Benjamin Banneker, a free Negro, had helped Pierre L'Enfant survey and map the city and where blacks, most of whom were slaves, had literally built the metropolis from the ground up, was ideal for several reasons: the favorable influence it might have on the multitudes that visited Washington from all sections of the nation and abroad; the religious home it would furnish for the many New Englanders employed by the government; the effect it would have on the consciences of the members of Congress.[5]

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[3] James Morehead, *American Apocalypse, Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 5 - 20.

[4] Ibid, 17, 211, 215.

[5] Studies that have focused on Washington, D.C. during this period include: Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967); Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington: Village and Capital, 1800-1878* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University

The chapter that follows looks at the American Missionary Association's response to the social conditions of Washington, D.C. during the Civil War. The AMA's response, initiated by Danforth B. Nichols, epitomizes the Association's attempts to dominate benevolent relief efforts during Reconstruction. Wanting to make a difference in a city of "Generals, politicians, and statesmen – greatness", Nichols felt he was too much of a "Yankee" and therefore he would not be as effective. However, his outreach provided the foundation for the establishment of a social policy towards African Americans. As Nichols displayed benevolent fervor, missionaries, teachers, and administrators as well as other benevolent associations called attention to the destitution condition of freedmen in and around union camps. As this

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Press, 1962); James H. Whyte, *Uncivil War: Washington During the Reconstruction* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958); Allan John Johnston, S*urviving Freedom: The Black Community of Washington, D.C., 1860-1880* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993); James Borchert, *Alley Life in Washington: Family, Community, Religion, and Folklife in the City, 1850-1970* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980); Thomas Reed Johnson, "City on the Hill: Race Relations in Washington, D.C., 1865-1885" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 1975); Margret Leech, *Reville in Washington, 1860-1865* (New York: Harper, 1941); Stanley Harrold, S*ubversives: Antislavery Community in Washington, D.C. 1828-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003); Katherine Masur, *An Example for all the Land: The Politics of Race and Citizenship in the District of Columbia, 1862-1878* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Elaine Cutler Everly, "The Freedmen's Bureau in the National Capital" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1971); Melvin Roscoe Williams, "Blacks in Washington, D.C., 1860-1870" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1976); Katherine Chilton, "City of Refuge: Urban Labor, Gender, and Family Formation during Slavery and the Transition to Freedom in the District of Columbia, 1820-1875" (Ph.D. dissertation, Carnegie Mellon University, 2009); Jacqueline M. Moore, *Leading the Race: The Transformation of the Black Elite in the Nation's Capital, 1880-1920* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999); Letitia Woods Brown, *Free Negroes in the District of Columbia, 1700 – to 1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Lois Elaine Horton, "The Development of Federal Social Policy for Blacks in Washington, D.C. after Emancipation" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1977); Alan Lessoff, *The Nation and Its City: Politics, "Corruption," and Progress in Washington, D.C., 1861-1902* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); William M. Maury, *Alexander "Boss" Shepherd and the Board of Public Works*, George Washington University Studies, no. 3. (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1975); Howard Gillette, *Between Justice and Beauty*: *Race Planning, and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington, D.C.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Mary E. Corrigan. "A Social Union of Heart and Effort: The African-American Family in the District of Columbia on the Eve of Emancipation" (Ph.D. University of Maryland, College Park, 1996); Mark Walgren Summers, *The Era of Good Stealing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Wilhelmus B. Bryan, *A History of the National Capital*. 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1916).

chapter explains, the formation of the AMA's response, in general, and the benevolence, in particular, emerged at the hands of various individuals who wanted to ease the transition from slavery to freedom.[6]

In September 1861, Washington, D.C. was a city on a hill. Known for its grand avenues, marble edifices, and landscape featuring ornamental trees through which southern breezes loved to play, the city's population of more than 75,058 had grown rapidly, allowing the streets to be full of life and movement. Immense trains of government horse-drawn wagons constantly traversed the streets. Large droves of horses clattered over the resounding pavements as mounted officers, singly, pairs, and squads, galloped to and fro between the camps and the public offices and quarters. Hundreds of black hack men found an abundance of passengers for their carriages, who rode up and down Pennsylvania Avenue and on various excursions of business or pleasure. To a stranger, the general impression was that of greatness, prosperity, thrift, and hope. The ideal scenery and ambitious pursuits of the capital city caused one seasoned correspondent to describe it as "a beautiful sight!"[7] Many slaves, from miles around, sought freedom in the city. The fugitive slave population steadily grew as war raged in the countryside. Those who risked being returned by federal soldiers, death if captured by southern sympathizers, and drowning crossing the turbulent waters of the Potomac, were fortunate to make it to the shores of the vibrant city. With the departure of southern members of Congress, a northern anti-slavery legislative ethos dominated. Legislators debated the merits

[6] Danforth B. Nichols to George Whipple and Simeon Jocelyn, May 29, 1862, AMAA (15883), AMAA.

[7] *Independent*, September 5, 1861.

and demerits of Fremont's Proclamation of August 1861, which freed slaves of Confederates in Missouri but was modified by President Lincoln. Pastors resigned pulpits because their vestry had been overrun with secessionists. The president attempted to hold the Union together.[8]

The inauguration and pending war had invigorated some Washingtonians who were amazed to see governors, editors, and others from throughout the nation filling the hotels and streets. Their reaction drew a comparison to a more notable northern city. "Our city," they remarked, "is like New York-Pennsylvania Avenue like Broadway. This war will revolutionize our city.[9]

By October 1861, the answer to the question of what must be done to defeat the slavocracy had become evident with the mobilization of militia companies and the burgeoning sea of pitched tents covering Washington's landscape. Serving as a sign that the federal government was readying to deploy its power in the fight over civil authority between slave and master, this show of readiness was enough for black men, women, and children of various ages and conditions to migrate to the shores of the Potomac. Adding to the eleven thousand blacks

[8] Until 1871 the municipality of Washington consisted only of the area bounded by the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers on the south and east and by Rock Creek and Boundary Street (Florida Avenue) on the north and west. The population figures refer only to that municipality and not Georgetown or the county. See Everly, "Freedmen's Bureau," 26.

[9] *Independent*, December 5, 1861; However grand the city was thought to be, It did have its detractors during the Antebellum years. Charles Dickens visited in 1842 and described the capital as "the City of Magnificent Intentions" and ridiculed its "spacious avenues, that begin in nothing, and lead to nowhere." See Masur, *An Example for All the Land*, 16.

already residing in Washington and Georgetown in 1860, thousands of refugees would see the capital as the “the promised land” and put their fate in the hands of government bureaucrats.[10]

The refugee accommodations were not as comfortable as many of them had expected. Forts, prisons, and jails were the first line of containment as local marshals scrambled to welcome the new arrivals. Crude government buildings, camps, and villages would provide for those seeking freedom. Eventually, the overwhelming flow of freedmen into the city persuaded city officials to develop Mason's Island in the Potomac River. About eleven thousand passed through the inner city camps and the District's total black population increased from 12,929 in 1860 to 38,663 in 1867 - from 21 percent of the total population to 44 percent.[11]

With fugitive slave laws still on the books, the legal status of the fugitive refugees caused many to question the reality of a “promised land.” Federal marshals continually tested that status by returning the property of citizens of loyal states. In June 1861 the federal government decided that those who reached the ranks of Union forces would be commandeered as "contraband" - property that could be seized in wartime, but not necessarily freed. Southern sympathizers called them "government pets" as city magistrates were not compelled to return the property of rebels. Despite the influx of fugitives into the capital, the District of Columbia was a pro-slavery town. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the

[10] Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 102.

[11] Information regarding Blacks in Antebellum Washington has been gathered from the second and third chapters of Constance Mclaughlin Green’s *The Secret City*. Population accounts have been taken from Tables I and II (pages 33 and 63); See also Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 105-112.

practice of throwing black people into prison on suspicion of being slaves. It was a routine practice to incarcerate fugitives, freedmen, and freemen in overcrowded disease-infested jails where fifteen to twenty, black and white, men and women were crowded into cold stone-floor cells. No blankets or straw were provided in the crude space.[12]

There needed to be criteria for determining the status and usage of fugitives who made their way into Union camps. Union commanders were uncertain as to how to deal with the slaves whom they faced. The dilemma they confronted was whether to return slaves, uphold the right to property, and aid the enemy by returning his labor supply versus holding contraband, denying constitutional property rights, and strangling the enemy's labor supply.

The Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, stated that he had no intention of including the armed services black soldiers at any time. Without precedent and exercising decisiveness during war, General Benjamin F. Butler allowed fugitive slaves to enter his camp at Fortress

[12] In her seminal work, Katherine Chilton retraces the various progressions of emancipation in the District of Columbia. I agree with her distinctions of African Americans from slavery to freedom. "Thus, slaves who escaped from their masters were generally known as "fugitive slaves" until General Butler's policy in May 1861 deemed them "contrabands of war". This term quickly entered common parlance, so I refer to slaves and former slaves who worked for the Union Army as "contrabands" or "contraband laborers" because their status as free people or slaves varied depending on their geographic origin and the progress of the war. After the initial inaction of the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863 freed all slaves in the District of Columbia, the term "freedman" was often use to describe those who had been enslaved, but in the District of Columbia "contraband" continue to be used to describe former slaves in the city. See Kate Masur, '"A Rare Phenomenon of Philological Vegetation': The Word "Contraband" in the Meanings of Emancipation in the United States," the Journal of American History, March (2007): 1050-1084 for an excellent discussion of the origins and evolution of the term contraband." See Katherine Chilton, "'City of Refuge, '" 152. For reference to "government pets" and the use of jails, see Green, *The Secret City*, 58-59. For prison conditions see Leech, *Reveille in Washington*, 141-142; James Downs, *Sick from Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press), 44, 99.

Monroe, Virginia, as "contraband". Secretary Cameron approved Butler's decision, however, he further stipulated that neither Butler nor his troops were to employ or seek out fugitive slaves. As word spread around region, escaped slaves joined the ranks of the Union Army, serving as manual laborers. The number of escaped slaves overwhelmed the camps which, at times, were bursting with hundreds of new entrants to feed, clothe, and shelter. Soon it became difficult to distinguish between slaves who fled rebel masters and slaves who left the company of loyal masters.[13]

The presence of Union troops and fugitive slaves in and around the District of Columbia created logistical difficulties for the leadership in Washington as they tried to maintain the support of loyal slave holders in Maryland. Congressman Charles Calvert demanded the immediate arrest of slaves found in camps in Maryland in Virginia. Calvert further protested that slaves were prone to slip away once the Union army appeared and the government should be held responsible for their abduction. Maryland slaveholders demanded action to prevent loss of their slaves and insisted that officers be posted to search railway cars for fugitives before it is allowed to leave.[14]

By August 1861, Congress was ready to act on the growing influx of slaves seeking refuge among Union troops. It approved an act which allowed the confiscation of all property used for insurrectionary purposes and declared any slave encompassed by the act to be free. In

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[13] Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 113-115, 119, 131; Downs, *Sick from Freedom*, 185n20, 198n65; Masur, *An Example for All the Land*, 55; For insight into the vexations of the District of Columbia City Council around the First and Second Confiscation Acts, see Chilton, *City of Refuge*, 162-168.

[14] Clinton, "City of Refuge", 161 – 162.

the meantime, Butler had reached a resolution concerning the burgeoning masses that included whole families and sent many of them to Washington, D.C.[15]

Union officers were complicit in retrieving fugitive slaves. They were supposed to ask the slave's status upon camp entry and before employment began. Slaves who had been used, according to McClelland's orders, in the service of the Confederate war effort could be employed by the Union army per Lincoln's First Confiscation Act. However, slaves who escaped from ordinary conditions of labor were to be dismissed from the camp. McClelland upheld the image of friend of the slaveholder as he excluded slaves from enlisting. Many officers were pained to serve as slave catchers in the face of pending battles against the Confederate in Virginia.[16]

In Washington, military soldiers placed those seeking refuge in vacated army barracks that immediately became overcrowded and unsanitary in the center of the city. Despite Butler's plan to employ, shelter, feed, and provide medical care, former slaves were placed at the whim of the authorities especially when their numbers far outstripped the employment options available in the city.[17]

Washington's City Council strongly protested against any attempts to end slavery in the District of Columbia. It warned that any attempt to abolish slavery would turn the District of Columbia into an asylum for free blacks. Nevertheless, amid great discussion, debate and

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[15] Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 118.

[16] Ibid., 164.

[17] Ibid., 119.

fanfare, in December 1861, a bill for manumission in the District of Columbia was introduced by Senator Henry Wilson from Massachusetts. The bill, which passed with amendments, was entitled "a bill for the release of certain persons held in service or labor in the District of Columbia". It provided for all persons so held, "by reason of African descent," or hereby discharged from all such claim, and that "from and after the passage of this act, neither slavery in or involuntary servitude, except for crime where of the party shall be duly convicted, shall here after exist in Senate district." There would be compensation to the loyal owner and an appropriation of one million dollars to be divided among valid claimants, at the discretion of three commissioners. The claimants, holders of slaves, were to present their claims within 90 days and declare their allegiance to the U.S. government. The commissioners were assisted by clerks and marshals in cases where they needed to subpoena witnesses and examine claimants under oath before deciding whether or not the claimants had a legitimate case. A "full and final" report had to be completed within nine months.[18]

While the bill was under consideration, slave masters sent their slaves to Baltimore in order to get around holding slaves in the city and to escape the possibility of setting them free. In some instances, slave families were broken in order to take advantage of Maryland's unwillingness to manumit. In many cases, fathers had an hour's notice before they are whisked

[18] *Independent*, February 27th 1862.

away from their "wives" and children. In other cases, the mother and her children were sent up to Baltimore away from the father.[19]

In 1862, the House of Representatives instructed the Committee on Military Affairs to work on additional article of war relating to return fugitive slaves. On March 13, both houses approve an act that prohibited the return of fugitives. Congress went even further in April 1862, and abolished slavery in the District of Columbia. After a few instances of military backtracking, the legislative body authorized the President to receive persons of African descent into the United States service of labor and military purposes.[20]

When soldiers began arriving in the city, the Fugitive Slave Law was difficult to enforce. The runaways soon learned that they could avoid capture by hiding in the army encampments and following the troops as they left the city. In an effort to reassure the nervous populace, the city's dailies told of numerous incidents in which military officers had willingly turned over fugitive slaves to local authorities. The *Evening Star* maintained: "Every opportunity is afforded loyal citizens of loyal states to recover their fugitive slaves." But the situation so alarmed Southern Marylanders that in mid-July one of their Representatives, Charles Benedict Calvert, complained to General Mansfield, commander of a Military Department of Washington, that his troops were concealing slaves. Sensitive to the Congressman's complaints, Mansfield issued an order forbidding the harboring of fugitives in the quarters or camps of his department or allowing them to accompany the troops on the march. Not satisfied, Calvert suggested that

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[19] *Ibid.,* March 20, 1862.

[20] Leech, *Reveille,* 244, 253-254, 272, 417.

someone be detailed to examine all cars with volunteers who were leaving the city, and he regretted that there had been no order "requiring all now in the camps to be arrested and confined until reclaimed or released according to the law."[21]

Increasingly the difficulty of enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law was reflected in the War Department's position that runaway slaves of disloyal Virginians be protected as "contrabands of war." Contradictory to orders relating to the fugitives, General Mansfield told his office not only to harbor the contrabands coming into their lines but also to put them to work. During the summer the army began housing some of the contrabands in the Old Capital Prison along with the political prisoners and prisoners of war. Mansfield told Justice Thomas Donn to put them "at work about the jail or for improvement of public premises, in its neighborhood, under the charge of some Superintendent."[22]

The distinction between "contraband" and "fugitive" was not so evident to civilian authorities who were prone to consider all non-resident blacks of the city as fugitives. To the displeasure of many Congressmen, stories of the county jail teeming with illegally detained blacks began to circulate. During the winter of 1861-62 the apprehension and confinement of fugitives threatened to become a major political scandal. [23]

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[21] Everly, "Freedmen's Bureau," 30.

[22] Ibid, 30-31; Visitors to the Capital city observed "contrabands" and their removal from the Georgetown canal river way to the Old Capital Prison where some were hired out at twenty dollars per month. Others among them remained indisposed and very destitute of clothing. See C.R. Vaughan to George Whipple, December 18, 1861 (15868), AMAA.

[23] Ibid., 31.

Ostensibly, the issue was the "inhumane" condition of the District jail where even free Blacks were being confined for long periods of time. Indirectly, the Radical Republicans were attacking the President by criticizing his friend and appointee, District Marshal, Ward Hill Lamon. Senators Henry Wilson and James H. Grimes publicly deplored the situation at the jail, comparing it to the Bastille or the dungeon of Venice. When Lamon refused them admittance to the jail without a written pass from the president of the Senate, they called the marshal a "foreign satrap." Trying to quell the disturbance, the president ordered that no one be held in the jail illegally, but that failed to satisfy the Senators who conducted an investigation of the jail the following June. [24]

Following complaints about conditions at the cold capital jail the famous detective Allan Pinkerton was engaged by the district provost marshal to investigate the matter in November 1861. The report attracted the immediate attention of President Lincoln and anti-slavery senators and representatives. Secretary of State William H. Seward moved to end the abuse by directing General George B. McClellan, Commander of the Army of the Potomac, to uphold the provisions of the Confiscation Act and insisted that city police refrain from making arrests of black people based on assumptions they were fugitives from slavery. [25]

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[24] Leech, *Reveille*, 239 – 241.

[25] Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 120.

Diseases were rampant among jail occupants who wore scanty clothing and ate wretched food. Lamon was severely reprimanded by the House on of Representatives for the abominable conditions in the jail after members conducted an unannounced visit. He responded by issuing an order to the jailer preventing anyone from entering the building without a pass. Senators were required to procure a pass from Vice President Hamlin and Representatives had to obtain a pass from Speaker of the House Galusha Grow, before they could enter the jail. The House of Representatives responded by curbing the Marshal's entering the Senate and House unannounced. The House of Representatives ordered him out of the hall via the speaker and doorkeeper.[26]

Freedmen and freemen were held for six to eight months without any charges except being suspected of having been slaves. If the master was not known, slaves were thrown into prison on suspicion and remained imprisoned until Congress interfered or someone came forward to claim them as their property. If no one claimed them, then they were eventually freed to work off their jail fees.[27] Members of Congress fiercely pushed for the enforcement of the First Confiscation Act. Yet, slaves of rebel soldiers languished through the summer months without a hearing. One example was the slave of Captain Dunnington, the former Chief of the Capital Police who commanded rebel batteries to fire on government vessels plying the

[26] *Independent*, December 12, 1861; Masur, *An Example for All the Land,* 92-93.

[27] Ibid.

Potomac River. His slave went about his own business until the authorities threw him into the filthy jail to be held until the rebel captain returned.[28]

Throwing black people into prison on suspicion of being slaves caused confusion among capital officials. Did the Confiscation Act simply turn slaves over from rebel masters to the United States Government - the Government then owning them? Therefore, the people of the North became slaveholders by the act of Congress. Their fate, whether sold at auction or freed, lay in the hands of the administration. Slaves were continually returned to claimants from camp, and files of soldiers were often seen escorting a fugitive back to the master, or to the District jail.[29]

There was great concern over the appearance and enforcement of the old Maryland slave code which was still enforced by authority of Congress, and was an ordinance of the city government. One of these old Maryland enactments maintained that a "black person, slave or free, could have the right hand cut off, to beheaded in the usual manner, the head severed from the body, the body divided into four quarters, the head and quarters set up in the most public places of the county where such act was committed, for a confession, conviction, or verdict by a jury, of any petite treason, or murder, or willfully burning of dwelling houses."[30]

The laws made possible the capture of innocent free men and their being sold into slavery to pay the kidnapper's bounty and jailer's incarceration. The master paid

[28] *Independent*, December 21, 1861.

[29] Ibid., January 23, 1862.

[30] The Independent, December 19, 1861; Proceedings and Acts of the State of Maryland, *Laws of Maryland*, (October 1727 to August 1729), 454 Chapter 4, Section 2.

“imprisonment fees” when they claimed the slave. If the incarcerated was actually a free person and no one identified him, then it was the duty of the Marshal, after advertising, to sell him as a slave, to pay the reward and jail fees.

The startling reports of these occurrences were discussed before Congressional Committees in 1827, 1828, and 1829. It was estimated that one hundred and seventy-nine persons were committed as runaways during the three year period; at least twenty-six of these were free persons; six of these were actually sold into slavery. Other codes included whipping a slave’s bare back if he was caught away from home without a pass. Punishment, in this case, should not have exceeded thirty-nine lashes, but was at the discretion of the constable. Also, if a slave went “abroad” by night, or rode a horse in the daytime, without leave, he could be punished by "whipping, cropping, or branding in the cheek." If he runs away and resists his pursuers, he may be "shot, killed, and destroyed."[31]

The laws of the nation reinforced this system. A few statutes forbade the distribution of anti-slavery publications and allowed the establishment of special police departments known to some "as a national guard to catch fugitive slaves." Fugitive slave laws, black codes, and the southern dominance in political matters were ways in which the South asserted its control over the District of Columbia. However, many within Congress felt the embarrassing stain of slavery in the Capitol and there was a moral demand to eliminate the institution.

The reaction to those who sought freedom in the city reminded many of the cities early growth on the banks of the Potomac. In 1800, twenty-three percent of the 3,210 inhabitants of

[31] Ibid.,Chapters 17 and 19.

the newly-formed city of Washington were black. However, of the 746 blacks only 123 were free. Slavery was not a major economic institution in the city inhabited mainly by government clerks and containing almost no industry. Most slave owners therefore had no more than a few household servants. Manumission, either through purchase by the slave's own labor or granted upon the death of an owner, was common, causing the free black population to grow.[32]

Fearing that the city might become a refuge for blacks from other parts of the country, the city government enacted ordinances to keep blacks "in their place." For example, in 1812 every free Negro was required to register, carry a certificate of freedom signed by three white residents, and furnished a peace bond of twenty dollars with a white man as surety for good behavior. The laws of 1827 placed heavier fines on blacks who disturbed the peace by imposing stricter curfew and increasing the peace bond to five hundred dollars.[33]

These often laxly enforced black codes failed to halt the growth of the city's Negro population. By 1830, over twenty-eight percent of the population of Washington was black, and free blacks outnumber slaves for the first time in the city's history. Nat Turner's rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia in 1831, however, frightened whites who were antagonistic to the institution of slavery. They closely monitored the free black population in their midst because they believed free blacks had been the instigators of the bloody plot. Fervor around the colonization of free blacks to Liberia grew, particularly in the Upper South, and state governments discussed ways to remove free blacks from their borders, including re-

[32] Brown, *Free Negroes*, 9-13.

[33] Green, Secret City, 18-19, 25-27.

enslavement. William Lloyd Garrison's Liberator stoked the flames even further as abolitionists specifically targeted Congress' power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. Overwhelmed by the voracity of the abolition group's support of this cause through meetings, petitions, and letters, Democratic representatives forced the passage of a Gag Rule in 1835, which prohibited any discussion of abolitionism or recognition of such petitions in Congress.[34]

In the same year, tensions were further heightened over the attempted murder of Mrs. William Thornton, widow of the designer of the Capitol, by one of her slaves. Vigilantism around the attempt sprouted riots of white mobs that targeted and demolished Negro churches, schools, tenements and several businesses, specifically, smashing the furnishings of mulatto Beverly Snow's restaurant. Instead of punishing the whites involved in the melee, the city corporation enacted a more severe black code, legally restricting free blacks to subordinate positions, forbidding them from owning shops and other businesses, and increasing the bond that black families had to provide to reside in the District to nearly one thousand dollars. Despite these crises, by 1840 the free black population of the District had again increased to 8,461. As with previous occasions, after calm was restored, city leaders quietly relaxed the black codes and resumed neglecting the laws that attempted to limit free blacks.[35]

The Washington City Council was not the only city in the upper south that sought to deter free black migrants from the countryside from joining free population of the city. Abolitionist agitation peaked as legislatures across the South attempted to restrict the rights of

[34] Harrold, *Subversives*, 32-35.

[35] Brown, *Free Negroes*, 10-13.

free blacks. In Richmond, the city council began enforcing the provision of the law that required free blacks to leave the state within a year of manumission with renewed vigor. The state refused to consider the petitions of one hundred persons who remained in the city and were forced to leave the state. Black waiters in Baltimore were pushed out of the hotel trade they had dominated for decade. In Washington D.C., when Congress banned slave trading within the city limits as part of the Compromise of 1850, a legislative throng to suppress black migration began with the Council requiring payment of fifty dollars for certificates of freedom - a huge sum for impoverished migrants. Although it was never passed, the Board of Aldermen and Common Council in Georgetown debated a measure to fund and transport the city's free black population out of the United States. As draconian as leaders of the District wanted to be, legislation and curfews did not curtail the striving for economic and social opportunities that delivered free blacks to the capital. Black migration was affected for the first time in the 1850's as population number decreased comparatively during the antebellum era due an increase in white and foreign-born migration to the city. With increased competition for work, racial prejudice fanned the passionate debates over slavery in the Capitol and spilled out into the streets where white employers shut free black builders and craftsmen out of the wave of construction of federal buildings. The free black population grew at its slowest rate during the 1850s, and by 1860 the proportion of free blacks in the District had declined from 19 to 15 percent of the total population. [36]

[36] Ibid., 74.

Free blacks who were fortunate enough to have escaped slavery through free birth or manumission were the only black migrants able to make their own decisions about moving to the District. They took the opportunity to migrate seriously, but waded through the temporary and permanent features of urban life. Free black migrants pursued their best interests, but were fundamentally in pursuit of freedom. With diminishing agricultural opportunities and oppression, the District drew potential migrants with economic opportunities and the support of the burgeoning black community. A solid black community complete with separate black churches, schools, and benevolent associations awaited those who would flee in addition to aid slave friends and family towards self-purchase along with helping fugitive slaves evade and escape from bondage. Free black migration formed the basis of free black community formation and in turn attracted more blacks; both slave and free sought their freedom in the District of Columbia throughout the antebellum era.[37]

The migration of Blacks from the rural countryside was essential to the process of black population development and began a long process of black urban migration which expanded after emancipation and continued into the twentieth century. The beginning of the rural to urban or push and pull migratory pattern into Washington, DC featured slaves or chattel property who uniquely maintained a quasi-freedom. As free labor that existed on the periphery of the peculiar institution of cities like DC, meant that the conditions of the urban environment allowed many of these forced migrants to experience a "freedom" where they could hire their

[37] Chilton, "City of Refuge," 80.

own time to socialize with their free black neighbors. For instance, the continual need for domestic servants meant that slave women were most represented in this migrant labor pool even in times of low black employment. The black population in Washington nurtured many fugitive slaves who seized control of their own destiny by running away to the District of Columbia. They were predominantly male semi-voluntary migrants as they chose to flee to the city in search of their own freedom by mixing amongst the solidifying black community.[38]

The freedom of the Nation's Capital was another pull against the forces of white discrimination and oppression in counties of Maryland and Virginia. Attaining economic opportunities of the city would permit potential migrants the ability to form their own households, control the conditions of their families' labor, and support their own separate institutions. Although the labor opportunities favor black women compared to rural areas thus skewing the cities sex ratio, both black men and women will work together to build the community around their churches, schools, and benevolent societies which only attracted more black to the city. The camaraderie between the free black and slave populations, developed by bonds of kin and community, encouraged runaway slaves flee to the District, where they could find relief. Generations of free blacks and slaves, who believed that the city was the best place to achieve a meaningful freedom, thus bequeathed a legacy of urban migration to those who continued to flock to the DC during and after emancipation. [39]

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[38] Ibid., 80-81.

[39] Ibid., 81.

The new push by benevolent agencies to provide education was a continuation of a long history of learning in the District of Columbia.[40] The first schoolhouse for black pupils was erected in 1807 by former slaves from Virginia; George Bell, Nicholas Franklin, and Moses Liverpool. The founders, two of whom were Navy Yard employees, built a small frame schoolhouse in northwest Washington and engaged a white man as teacher. Its tenure was short-lived due to the inability of the impoverished black community to pay tuition and the Black Code that mandated that "no writings are to be done by the teacher for a slave, neither directly nor indirectly, to serve the purpose of a slave on any account whatsoever."[41]

Three other schools for black children opened within the next four years, one started by an Englishman, another by a black woman on Capitol Hill, and the third for black children in Georgetown. The founder of the Georgetown school, the British-born Mrs. Mary Billings, trained many of the educated children in the city. Those enrolled in her school learned little beyond the three R's, and lack of money forced all but Mrs. Billings' school to close before 1813.[42]

The first white public schools in Washington, on the other hand, had little more to offer and suffered much the same fate. Although white men had raised funds by subscription and in

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[40] On the development of black schools in the District of Columbia, see John Kimball to Charles H. Howard, January 19, 1867, *Records of the Committee on the District of Columbia*, SEN 39A-E4, Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group 42 (National Archives); M.B. Goodwin, "Schools and Education of the Colored Population in the District," in Special Report of the Commissioner of Education, 193-300; Green, *Washington: Village and Capital*, 280-83 and 304-8; Rayford Logan *Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867 – 1967 (New York: New York University Press, 1968), 10-13*; Lillian G. Dabney, *The History of Schools for Negroes in the District of Columbia, 1807-1947* (Washington, 1949); and Masur , *Reconstructing the Nation's Capital*," 228-60.

[41] Logan, *Howard University*, 10.

[42] Green, *Washington: Village and Capital*, 17.

1806 the city council voted tax money to help support the Permanent Institution for the Education of Youth, one of its two schools shut down in 1812 and the other limped along with a single teacher and a mere handful of pupils.[43]

Appalled by the plan of the American Colonization Society to send them to Africa, many blacks within the District were determined to depend upon themselves in order to be a part of a stable community in the United States. They organized the Resolute Beneficial Society in 1818, as a mutual-aid group whose purpose was to provide health and burial benefits for members. It used most of its funds, however, to open a school for black children. The Resolute Beneficial Society soon found itself unable to carry the cost of a school, but, shortly after it closed, Henry Smothers, one of Mrs. Billings' students, furnished a classroom and taught his neighbors' children free of charge. From that time onward, blacks maintained at least one school in Washington.[44]

Eventually, Smothers taught at a school in Georgetown, and in the 1820's at the Western Academy, on the corner of Nineteenth and I streets, Northwest. He later built his own schoolhouse at Fourteenth and H Streets, Northwest, near the site of the present-day New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. He was believed to have taught some one hundred students. When Smothers could no longer pay the expenses because tuition was not compulsory, John

[43] Logan, *Howard University*, 25; Green, *Washington: Village and Capital*, 45.

[44] Ibid.

Prout, another colored man, took charge and required a monthly tuition fee of 12.5 cents. The school was then named the Columbia (or Columbian) Institute.[45]

Despite the City Council's years of giving blacks no encouragement to settle in Washington, some white people lent their constructive help. Mrs. Mary Billings moved her school from Dumbarton Street, Georgetown, in 1820-1821, to H Street in Washington and upon her death in 1823 two Englishmen carried it on. From time to time a Maryland philanthropist taught black children in sessions held outdoors under a tree when he could find no suitable place indoors. Two churches organized Sunday evening classes where adult blacks might learn to read, and every denomination in the city enrolled black children in Sunday school, first in classes with white children, later, as the black population multiplied, in separate units. In 1827 the priest of the Holy Trinity Church in Georgetown founded the first seminary for black girls and himself taught classes of boys. Moreover, during the 1820s black children in Washington and Georgetown sometimes attended white private schools.[46]

Among the other private schools was one built in 1830 by William Wormley, near the corner of Vermont Avenue and I Street, where his brother James Wormley owned a restaurant. Partially destroyed by a mob in 1835, the school was repaired it continue to operate behind James Wormley's hotel. Another school was the Wayland Baptist Seminary, established in the basement of the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church. Of the five or six other schools in the city Louisa Park Costin's on Capitol Hill was perhaps the best known. Her father provided the

[45] Logan, *Howard University*, 10.

[46] Green,

schoolhouse. As William Costin had imbued his daughters with a passion of service to their race, upon Louisa's death her younger sister carried on the school until 1839. All told, several hundred black children obtained some schooling each year during the 1830s.[47]

The new black churches knit that group closely together. John Prout continued to teach at his famous Columbia Institute until his former pupil John F. Cook succeeded him in 1834 and renamed the school the Union Seminary. As head of the largest black school in Washington and thus leader among his fellows, he taught even after he was ordained in 1843 by the regional synod as Washington's first colored Presbyterian minister. Upon his father's death in 1855, the school was continued by his son, John F. Cook, Jr. until 1857, when he was succeeded by his younger brother, George F.T. Cook. The latter moved the school to the basement of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, which his father helped to found in 1841 and where his brother officiated.[48]

Although the proposal of a mayoral candidate to open black public schools died with his defeat, at the end of the 1850s over 42% of the free black population was literate, and some 1,100 children were attending private schools. On the "island," a section of Washington cut off from the rest of the city by the canal that linked the Eastern Branch near Arsenal Point with the Potomac below the White House, Arabella Jones, one-time servant in John Quincy Adams' household, conducted an unusually fine school for girls. Under the aegis of the priest at St. Matthews, white teachers instructed the pupils at the St. Vincent de Paul Free Catholic Colored

[47] Green, *Secret City*, 40.

[48] Ibid.

School. At the Union Seminary, John Cook's pupils were divided into male and female departments, they studied composition, the scriptures, reading, and recitation; they learned from a manual of morals and physiology, focused on the teeth, the respiratory organs, and -- perhaps a matter of special interest to his students - the skin. Probably here as in most of the other schools, whatever the race of the teachers, children got at most a sound elementary education. Myrtilla Miner's "high school" went much further. The black girls enrolled there received a better education than that available to most white children. Miner, a frail middle-aged white woman from New York state, opened her school in 1851 with the backing of friends and such ardent abolitionists as Harriet Beecher Stowe. The quality of the teaching, the range of subjects, and the pervasive atmosphere of mutual affection and the cordial relations between white staff and the pupils combined to make Miss Miner's such a model institution that envious white people objected. Ex-mayor Walter Lenox accused her of educating black children beyond their station in life and warned the city that her activities might turn Washington into a black educational center. Unhappily, ill health and the outbreak of war forced her to close the school in 1861. During the Civil War, with the influx of freed slaves and contrabands, the 58 percent illiteracy count rose to an undetermined figure.[49]

Washington, compared with other American cities with a large black population, offered African Americans many opportunities. After the effects of the "Snow riots" subsided, blacks such as James Wormley, who operated a hotel, and Alfred Jones, who owned a feed store, amassed considerable wealth as entrepreneurs. While there were no provisions for public

[49] Green, *Secret City*, 50.

schools, there were no prohibitions against private ones. Ambitious blacks and interested whites, such as John F. Cook and Myrtilla Miner, ran creditable institutions. As blacks formed their own congregations, the church became the center of religious and social life. While most of the families did not live in anything approximating luxury, their quarters were probably no worse than those of the European immigrants. The black population of antebellum Washington was restricted but not degraded; it contained distinct social classes whose lifestyle was quite different from that of the slaves in the rural South.[51]

In the decade immediately preceding the Civil War, the proportion of Blacks, and the number of slaves, declined. Of the total population of 75,080 there were 11,131 free blacks and 3,185 slaves in the District of Columbia.[58] The Compromise of 1850 had outlawed the slave trade within the capital city, but the Fugitive Slave Law helped to restrict black migration. In a further effort to control black migration, the city government made black codes more enforceable by reducing the peace bond to fifty dollars and requiring every new black resident to report within five days of his arrival in the city or face the penalty of a fine or a jail term and possible expulsion from the District.[59]

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[51] Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 12, 82, 86, 161; Harrold, *Subversives*, 231-232; Green, *Secret City*, 51, 102; 127, 133.

[58]By contrast, in 1860 neighboring Maryland had 83,942 free blacks and 87,189 slaves and Virginia 58949 free blacks and 409,865 slaves. See Everly, "Freedmen's Bureau," AMA, 28n.

[59] Ibid., 28-29; Whyte, *The Uncivil War*, 27-28.

As the war progressed and the city became more and more under the domination of the military, civilian enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law became a dead issue. Soldiers quartered in the city often prohibited masters who produced legal writs from reclaiming their property. As the number of contrabands increased, it became more difficult for them to disappear within Washington's black community. Usually escaping from bondage with little more than the clothes on their backs, they had little understanding of the world to which they had fled and no plan for the future. Distinct from Washington's black residents, they at first tended to fend for themselves but, the military gradually began to assume more and more of their care.

In January 1862, there were reportedly from fifty to one hundred contrabands in the care of William P. Wood, superintendent of the Old Capital Prison. Wood tried to find homes for them, and the Army employed the able-bodied men as scavengers at the public buildings and hospitals, as sanitary policemen, and laborers on the defenses and fortifications surrounding the city, paying them forty cents a day plus rations.[60]

In March, 1862, Congress forbade the military employing any force to return fugitives. The military District of Washington was established and Brigadier General James S. Wadsworth was appointed military governor. A native of New York and an organizer of the Free Soil Party, Wadsworth had a liberal interpretation of the term "contraband." The instituted the policy of

[60] Ibid., 33; Wood was known a good "antislavery man" who looked out for the well-being of the newly arrived. See C.B. Vaughan to George Whipple, December 18, 1861 (15868), AMAA. Also see Curtis Carroll Davis, "The 'Old Capital' and Its Keeper: How William P. Wood Ran a Civil War Prison," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* 52 (1989): 206-212.

issuing a military protection to contrabands in the form of a paper signed by himself. Constantly intervening on behalf contrabands who had been arrested by civilians, he and Lamon were frequently at odds over the former's infallibility in determining who was contraband. Before its repeal in June, 1864, the Fugitive Slave Law had caused to be a deterrent to black migration to black migration to the capital city.[61]

Congress also played a part in abetting the black migration. In April, 1862, the District of Columbia became the first slaveholding area to emancipate its slaves. Although the law technically freed only the approximately 3,185 slaves of the District residents, it meant that runaways could enter a free area. The following May, the carefully constructed black codes, were abolished. The same month Congress passed legislation providing for public schools for black children.[62]

The bill inspired debate over whether or not the country had finally lived up to its self-image as a place that held the natural right of liberty sacrosanct. "Liberty should be ordained with an enthusiasm of justice," wrote Horace Greeley. "Have the friends of the natural rights of man considered that this national duty?…We owe emancipation to the slave. Simple right and justice should precede all questions of policy or expediency. Men have a natural right to liberty. It is God's gift…Washington and the capital of liberty… This government was ordained for liberty. It has elapsed from its ordination. It must go back. President Lincoln should put

[61] Everly, Freedmen's Bureau, 31-32; Wayne Mahood, *General Wadsworth: Life and Times of Brevet Major General James S. Wadsworth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: De Capo Press, 2003), 78, 90-91, 99, 118.

[62] Everly, "Freedmen's Bureau," 32-33.

himself where Washington stood. He ought to clear my word and by deed, that here after every influence of this government shall be administered honestly for liberty and against slavery exclamation marked-administered legally, constitutionally, discreetly, to be sure, but really and unmistakably in administered, so that this whole land, and every ambitious young man in it, shall know that the road of preferment lies away from slavery and were liberty!"[63]

As the city waited for the passage of the emancipation bill and the abolition of the Black Code, there were exchanges within the public sphere that demonstrated the slow adjustment in racial attitudes. In one instance, a correspondent overheard while reviewing a portrait that hung on the wall of the Capitol rotunda: "what are we coming to? The command, "will you! Negroes in the Capital!" was directed at two intelligent-looking, neatly-dressed colored men looking at the paintings in the rotunda. The two broke the written terms of the black code where no colored person can go near the Capitol grounds or building unless as a police servant of a white men![64]

After witnessing the passage of the emancipation bill and the applause that ensued, the correspondent of the *Independent* reported an exchange with a slaveholder outside the doors of Congress. The slaveholder who was among other southerners with gloomy faces, did not regret the passage of the bill. Among his slaves, he had one mechanic, for whom he was continuously offered $3000. He was now buying himself by his industry. The bill would free him at once, and the owner claimed to be glad of it. As for the other slaves, he thought the

[63] *Ibid.*, February 27, 1862.

[64] *Ibid.*, April 17, 1862.

government paid fairly for them-nearly as much as their market price. "It's my opinion that some people here, who have been so anxious to take their slaves out of the district, will find that they have plundered. Slave-property is never going to be worth so much in this country as it has been![65]

The abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia thus was a prime example of compensated emancipation, which was not to be repeated anywhere else in the United States. Slaveholders stood before the Board to try and recover any remnant value from their human property, and the pages of the *National Intelligencer* included daily lists of District residents and the number of slaves they claimed. Mildred Ewall was among the first slave owners to submit a petition for her six slaves, claiming that their worth on the current market was $4,800. As slaves were set free from April 16, 1862 onwards, owners were not required to produce their former slaves in order to claim compensation, and some even tried to claim for slaves who had run away during the war. Congress appointed a Board of Commissioners to adjudicate the claims, but as they lacked the necessary expertise to value the slaves the three-man panel sought advice from "an experienced dealer in slaves from Baltimore." Ultimately 909 slave owners came forward to claim their slave property and the Board awarded compensation for 2,989 slaves, and rejected claims for 111 slaves." Slaves in Washington thus gained their freedom through the stroke of a pen as whole families who had been born in bondage were

[65] *Ibid.*, April 24, 1862.

emancipated together. Selena Williams, saw four children and her four grandchildren all released from slavery as a part or the “first freed.”[66]

Once emancipation had finally arrived in the District of Columbia, there was noticeable elation throughout the city. Churches were crowded with happy faces. An editorial page read "Washington is free!" Slavery and its institution no longer held the District of Columbia in bondage.” “Merchants could no longer trade in human flesh as Black people owned themselves. Black families could come together as households. Washington is free!”[67]

A telling scene that took place before the Commissioner of emancipation epitomized the elation of black residents in the city. One morning, commissioners, claimants, and former gathered for a compensation hearing as a part of the District’s Emancipation Act. A slave dealer sat idle as he was supposed to chime in with his opinion of the ordinary value of the slaves. On this occasion, the value of the slave was not in question, but rather the loyalty of the claimant, a white woman from Georgetown, was the issue.[68]

When asked what kind of evidence she was bringing as the "property" of the claimant, the black former housemaid asserted that she was not testifying against her late mistress. "I only know," said she, in plain language, "then all the talk I heard in the house I heard nothing in favor of the government, but a great deal in favor of the South and the rebellion. The young folk sang Jeff Davis songs, and whenever there was a rebel victory they carried on as if they

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[66] Chilton, “City of Refuge,” 166 – 167.

[67] *Independent*, January 9th 1862.

[68] Ibid.

were greatly pleased, and when the Lincoln troops beat they were very sorry." And "this is all the evidence you have to offer," asked one of the commissioners? "No," replied the colored woman with a bitter smile: "that is not all. I want to tell you what that woman did to me. Last spring I have three children, my own children, that I love as well as she loves…She got the idea into her head that Congress would free the slaves in the District, and so she took everyone of my children away from the district, and carried them to that man sitting in that chair," pointing to the slave dealer, "and he sold them. I got on to my knees to beg her to have mercy upon me, and not go in part me and my children-to sell them off away from me because she feared Congress might send us free. I told her I loved my children as well as she loved hers. But it all did no good. She would not hear one word I said, and she did not get one dollar more than she would have got into she had kept them; but to make a little money, and she supposed she was doing, she sold my children from me. Then she'd be a loyal woman who would do that?"

As the former slave mistress and the dealer sat red-faced and losing hope of all compensation, the former slave woman demonstrated her reciprocal understanding of loyalty as one that transcended the bond between citizen and state or local leaders in political matters, but rather of the more virtuous kind where one's labor was the ultimate sacrificial badge of loyalty. She felt that a woman who undermined the value of such a bond was disloyal and unworthy of a fair act of emancipation. [69]

Slaves from Maryland and Virginia did not need any further incentive to seek freedom in the District of Columbia. As city's slaves anticipated freedom for those who reached the city

[69] *Independent*, June 26th 1862.

boundaries, the City Council feared the District would become an "asylum for negroes". Employment drew many blacks to Union encampments around the city. After arriving, able-bodied men and women soon found employment with the army and particularly the quartermaster department. Black men, the first fugitives to arrive en masse, fled to the army encampments around the District to supply the labor needs of the army while their wives and children followed shortly after their arrival. Some women found employment in the camps as cooks and laundresses, but the majority of women particularly those with children, depended on their husbands or male relatives for support.[70]

In July 1862 the Second Confiscation Act allowed army officers in the District of Columbia to follow the usual protocol of employing contraband laborers. It stated that all slaves of disloyal masters would be considered "forever free of their servitude" once they reached Union lines. It also provided official backing to the policy of employing black men in military or naval service and granted freedom to all such laborers, as well as their families. Military employment thus offered a clear pathway out of bondage for contrabands as well as their families. Although these provisions explicitly only applied to the slaves of disloyal masters, runaways from Maryland again were able to take advantage of the huge demand for their labor to secure freedom for themselves and their families, if they could get to the District of Columbia in employment with the army.[71]

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[70] Chilton, "City of Refuge," 156-157; Berlin et al. ed., *Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South*, 293; Mahood, *General Wadsworth*, 118- 120.

[71] Mahood, *General Wadsworth*, 118.

Some among the newly freed found a means to "do for themselves" in the city. However, wartime inflation characterized by high rents and food prices sapped the freedom experience. As freedom became more and more unsustainable, army officials began to collaborate with representatives of Northern charitable associations to organize and run "contraband camps" that provided housing and other services. To them the migrant population was slowly loosing its footing in the transition between slavery and freedom. Dangerously overcrowded neighborhoods, alleyways, and shanties along with the potential outbreak of disease infested quarters were beginning to weigh heavily on and take priority in dealing with the new residents of the city. [72]

Contrabands that had escaped from slavery were determined not to return to chattel status. Slaveholders were just as determined to recover their "property" by legal or extralegal means. Advertisements for runaways in the Washington newspaper offered rewards for the return of slaves voluntarily of involuntarily. Some slaveholders used gentle persuasion by promising slaves no punishment or auction sale if the offender returned on their own volition. Others casually allowed slaves that ran away the option of trying out their new freedom and if

[72]Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, 1967), 58-65; Lois E. Horton, "The Days of Jubilee: Black Migration during the Civil War and Reconstruction," in Francine Curro Cary, ed*., Urban Odyssey: A Multicultural History of Washington, D.C.* (Washington, 1996), 65-78; Ira Berlin et. Al., eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867*. Series I, Vol. I: *The Destruction of Slavery* (Cambridge, Eng., 1985), 159-67; Ibid., Vol. II: *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South* (Cambridge, Eng., 1993), 243-62; Margret Leech, *Reveille in Washington, 1860-1865* (New York, 1941), 235-252; James Borchert, *Alley Life in Washington: Family, Community, Religion , and Folklife in the City, 1850-1970* (Urbana, Ill., 1980); Donald E. Press, "South of the Avenue: From Murder Bay to the Federal Triangle," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C.*, 51 (1984), 51-70; James H. Whyte, *Uncivil War: Washington During the Reconstruction* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958), 32;

it did not work out for them, then the plantation would always be open. They could return and receive "the same treatment in every respect" as they were accustomed to throughout their service.

In all of its grandeur, the nation's capital continued to be a regimented city. Army regiments, brigades, and work divisions passed up and down the avenues. Divisions were seen marching down 14th Street with the sunbeams upon 17,000 bayonets. Military cadence whiffed throughout the town's streets as men marched en masse. So quiet, impressive, and grand were the movements of the Union Army that it caused thousands of blacks to pick up and follow the units into the District of Columbia.[73]

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Congregationalism was slowly burgeoning in the District of Columbia. A Congregational society gathered for public worship on February 16, 1853. The AMA leadership in New York discussed sending a missionary to the city, soon after the First Congregational Church of Christ opened. The church fellowship was short-lived due to the suspension of the pastor, Rev. George Clarke, and funds to support the new pastor, Rev. Alexander Duncanson from Scotland, were not provided. The AMA's president, George Whipple, was not concerned with the friction at the church. Through the pulpit searches, the increase in membership, and potential sale of

[73] Benjamin Franklin Cooling, "Defending Washington during the Civil War," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 71/72 (1971/1972): 324-325.

the church, the AMA remained focused on its benevolent mission. Although the AMA's first encounters among the soldiers and freedmen in the camps around the city were not well received and competition among mission groups became evident, the AMA mustered support from Charles Sumner and Abraham Lincoln to visit Union posts in the South.[75]

For those in the free missions movement, this was a transformative moment that called its members to arms in freeing the bondsmen and showing they were capable of thriving in a free society. In the summer of 1861 the American Missionary Association sent teachers to Fortress Monroe to teach the contrabands gathered near the headquarters of General Benjamin Butler. The Association dispatched missionaries to the Sea Islands off the South Carolina coast the following winter. Under the leadership of Edwin Stanton, the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Treasury Chase, who was placed in charge of contraband affairs, a dedicated and zealous group of men and women departed from New York City in the spring of 1862 to aid freedmen. Soon afterwards, benevolent societies made concerted efforts to send missionaries to various parts of the south, including the nation's capital.[76]

After scouting the South for potential mission fields and interviewing Lincoln regarding the association's potential war contribution, the AMA saw its greatest usefulness in the effort to help black contraband. Tremendous possibilities presented themselves at Fortress Monroe,

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[75] I. Bigelow to George Whipple, November 15, 1852 (15804), AMAA; E.S. Stevens to George Whipple, February 25, 1858 (15828), AMAA; C.S. Stevens to George Whipple, March 26, 1858 (15832), AMAA; George W. Bassett to Simoen Jocelyn, August 28, 1858 (15835), AMAA; George W. Bassett to Lewis Tappan, George Whipple, and Simeon Jocelyn, December 14, 1858 (15837), AMAA; George W. Bassett to AMA, December 22, 1858 (15838), AMAA; J. Dennis Jr. to George Whipple, May 18, 1860 (15853), AMAA.

[76] Ibid., 85.

Virginia where members of Baptist mission societies took the lead in coordinating relief to the freedmen. Remaining skeptical of Baptist involvement in freedmen relief and waiting for approval to begin its work, the AMA sought a man of the right "stamp" to go to Fortress Monroe. Initially, W. L. Coan, a missionary sent to scout conditions, was believed to be the right one to lead efforts on behalf of the AMA. However, Whipple concluded that it would be difficult for the AMA to succeed there because Coan, instead, "derived" an appointment from Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase to become an agricultural superintendent. Whipple suggested that another missionary, C.B. Wilder, would be a better fit and his anxiety to beginning the association's reconstruction increased while waiting for such "greatness".[77]

After March 12, following the departure of the Army of the Potomac from Washington, D.C. to the Virginia peninsula, black contraband migrants were placed under the care and protection of General James S. Wadsworth. He immediately removed all blacks from the Old Capital and housed them in Duff Green's Row on East Capitol Street, at the site of the present Folger Library. Newcomers were examined on the point of their master's loyalty and, on giving

[77]In a letter dated November 26, 1861, Jocelyn addressed "his excellency", Abraham Lincoln, with a letter that lauded the Associations works at Fortress Monroe, Virginia. In the letter he mentions the schools, religious character, and preaching gifts of many of the exhorters. The main reason for his inquiry was to acquire a surgeon for the "contraband" like Surgeon Browne of Camp Hamilton, Virginia. In closing, Jocelyn informs the President that many of the contraband pray for him, the triumph of the Union Army, and the success of Congress. In speaking of a possible interview, Jocelyn said: "You could favor me, though not for a very few moments, with an interview it may promote the ends of humanity and greatly oblige me and the American Missionary Association, many thousands of whose members daily hear you in prayers to the "Throne of Grace"." See Jocelyn to Abraham Lincoln, November 26, 1861 (93190), AMAA; Mentions camps Wadsworth and Todd, also the Orthodox Friends. See also Simon Cameron to Mansfield French, January 6, 1861 (15859), AMAA; A.L. Post to George Whipple, August 19, 1861 (15862), AMAA; CB Wilder to Simeon Jocelyn, February 24, 1862 (15875), AMAA; C.B. Wilder to Simeon Jocelyn, February 27, 1862 (15876), AMAA.

satisfactory evidence against the same, were issued a paper signed by Wadsworth and known as "military protection". Wherever possible able-bodied men and women were placed in private service in the area, employment lessened the financial burden on the government thus limiting overcrowding in the camp.[80]

The hundreds of black men, women, and families were a tremendous burden on the capabilities of the army. Benevolent societies and government officials who were charged with caring for new arrivals were hesitant in providing relief. The military department, headquartered in the city, assumed the urgent responsibility for the contraband population in the District of Columbia. The fugitive slaves who stole away to freedom hurried to the city as able bodied men and women were in great demand as labor for the army and private citizens. Among the population arriving, women, children, and the elderly became dependent on government or private charity.

Between 1861 and 1862, freedmen's relief by the AMA remained small. Fundraising for the cause did not receive priority and organizational receipts were actually slightly less than for previous years. Despite its best efforts, the association had been unable to attract the support needed to carry out its mission to the freedmen. AMA officers turned to new strategies to secure support for the effort. First, they urged the federal government to take greater responsibility for the growing social crisis. The AMA sent Simeon Jocelyn, its secretary, to update President Lincoln on AMA activities in Virginia and asked for an interview for other AMA

[80] Green, *The Secret City*, 61-62; Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 121; Harrold, *Subversives*, 225; Mahood, *General Wadsworth*, 120.

leaders. Whipple, with letters of the introduction from Senators Charles Summer and Henry Wilson, also met with Chase to seek his assistance. Association officers exert all their limited political influence to encourage the government to care for contrabands. [81]

Despite the slow drip of funds into the AMA coffers, the association maintained a strong presence in the South. Jocelyn remained updated on reports from the House of Representatives on the totality of mission work in the South. The AMA executives saw the organization as the sole guardian of the "contrabands" at Fortress Monroe and it expected to have first offer of transportation passes for its leadership which continually visited the southern fields, including Port Royal, South Carolina. Whipple periodically traveled to Washington to have an audience with Sumner, Lincoln, and Chase. The AMA leadership wanted to maintain close contact with those responsible for placement, funding, transportation, and property disbursement.[82]

The AMA was hesitant to expand its mission in Washington. The bureaucracy, enormity of the circumstances, and unfamiliarity with the site were formidable barriers to expanding the organization's operations. On March 24, 1862, Rev. J. W. Alvord, President of the American Tract Society, who followed the situation closely, warned of the impending crisis of freedmen entering the District of Columbia. He attempted to garner congressional help but was overwhelmed by the immediacy of the situation. He concluded that something "must be done." The first and most obvious fact arising from an analysis of arrivals at the camps is the extent to which the volume and origin of contraband migration was tied to military events in

[81] Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction*, 75.

[82] William E. Whiting to George Whipple, July 10, 1862 (86000), AMAA; Simeon Jocelyn to George Whipple, June 17, 1862 (85958), AMAA.

the surrounding countryside. There was, of course, a wide range of circumstances under which former slaves made their way into the Washington area. Some stories were testament to the determination and courage of individual slaves who sought freedom. Sarah Johnson, a seventy year old woman, walked alone from Leesburg, Virginia to the city. To avoid capture by Confederate troops she travelled the thirty miles between Leesburg and Washington at night and hid out during the day.[85]

Particularly in the winter, poverty was a stark reality for most of the black newcomers. C.B. Vaughan told Whipple that some of the contrabands arrived at the Old Capitol with their feet cracked open with frost. Many were "so destitute and suffering as no tongue can tell."[86]

Conditions at the contraband camps, plagued with overcrowding, dirt, disease, and high mortality rate were worsening. In June 1862 the National Freedmen's Relief Association of the District of Columbia, a small group of minor government workers convened the previous March, convinced General Wadsworth to appoint Danforth B. Nichols as superintendent of contrabands.[87]

Nichols was a restless and controversial figure who worked among the Washington contrabands and freedmen. Affiliated with the American Missionary Association, he had arrived in the capital city on May 28th to offer his services to the contrabands assembling in Washington. His past indicated that his enthusiasm for the cause was greater than his ability to

[85]George Whipple to Simeon Jocelyn, June 18, 1862 (15889), AMAA; George Whipple to Simeon Jocelyn, March 24, 1862 (15890), AMAA; Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 49.
[86] C. B. Vaughan to George Whipple, January 25, 1862 (15872), AMAA.

[87] D. B. Nichols to George Whipple, June 16, 1862 (15888), AMAA.

fill his mission. As a traveling Methodist minister, he had spent the years 1845-47 on the frontiers of Iowa, but became discouraged about his usefulness as a savior of souls. He applied to the American Missionary Association for an assignment in a foreign field, preferably the West Indies. In a letter of recommendation J.A. Thomer told the Association that because of Nichols' "congregational education and catholic spirit" the Iowa Methodists did not receive him well and he had neither "the requisite bigotry nor the requisite boisterousness." Later, Nichols was involved with prison reform and was in charge of the Chicago Reform School. At the commencement of the war he had gone to the Sea Islands of South Carolina to minister to the abandoned slaves, but for some reason he left there after a short stay.[88]

The AMA sent Danforth B. Nichols, a white Methodist minister from Boston, to the District of Columbia. Upon his arrival on May 29, 1862, he mentioned avoiding swindling porters while on the train ride to the city and that he prayed he would be successful with God's help in the city of "Generals, politicians, and statesmen." Since no one had summoned Nichols to Washington, no one awaited him, causing him to commence his ministry by contacting Washington's black religious leaders. He told his superiors he had walked about the streets, explaining his mission to one of the first blacks he saw. The man, who happened to be loading wood into his cart, told Nichols to go to the War Department and meet Brother Sims who in turn introduced him to the pastor of the Union Bethel Church. The latter received Nichols "as he brother," took him to his church, and the two had a "good time" talking over the past.[89]

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[88] J. A. Thomer to George Whipple, July 7, 1847 (39599), AMAA; Harrold, *Subversives*, 226-227.

[89] D.B. Nichols to George Whipple and Simeon Jocelyn, May 29, 1862 (15883), AMAA.

On his way to find housing, Nichols walked past the Treasury Department, Post Office, War Department, and the White House. He arrived at the ferry on the Potomac where he saw an Indian and began exhorting him on the shore. He also exhorted to a black man, Brother Sims, who took him to his pastor, Rev. James H. Handy of the Union Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. They talked and Nichols agreed to preach for him at the ensuing Sabbath services. Nichols crossed the city to see Rev. Henry McNeil Turner, who was overjoyed to see him. Turner wanted Nichols to help make changes in his school to accommodate the contrabands who were beginning to arrive. Turner thought Nichols came at the right time. Nichols agreed to preach and teach for Turner.[90]

Nichols soon met an educated black minister who knew Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. The two traveled to the Capitol building and were astonished by what they saw and heard. Nichols saw blacks dressed in their finery yet he witnessed his friend insulted when he was called "nigger". The two immediately left, confused by the experience. Another black man related to

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[90] Henry McNeal Turner (February 1, 1834 to May 8, 1915), Theologian, African colonizationist. Born free in New Berry Courthouse, South Carolina, Henry McNeal Turner worked picking cotton during his youth. He experienced an emotional conversion at a camp meeting as a teenager. Licensed to preach by the Methodist Episcopal Church-South in 1853, he took to the road as a traveling evangelist. In 1858, he joined the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in St. Louis and spent the next five years as an AME pastor in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. In 1863 Turner organized the first regiment of the U.S. Colored Troops in his churchyard and was commissioned as chaplain, becoming probably the first black army chaplain. He was present at the battles in Petersburg, Virginia, and Fort Fisher, North Carolina. See Jack Salzman, David L. Smith, and Cornel West, eds. *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History* (New York: Simon and Schuster and the Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York, 1996), 2681-2682; Few historians have considered the promise and the limits of interracial cooperation in the intense and sometimes secret efforts by a small cadre of antislavery activists to help local black people escape from slavery. See Harrold, *Subversives*, 233, 241.

Nichols that the war was like the plagues of Egypt and that it was Providential.[92]

Nichols found housing in a pricey area on Capitol Hill, near the prison where the rebel and state prisoners were confined. Vocationally, he drew on his work with the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society as his administrative responsibilities included writing letters for monthly concerts and speaking to audiences, including the orthodox Congregationalist and Baptist, about the Port Royal "experiment" on the Sea Islands of South Carolina.[93]

In June 1862 Nichols received a favorable reception from members of the black community when he opened a Sabbath School at the Colored Old Bethel Church two miles from his house. He attended prayer services at the local Lutheran church, preached for Rev. Handy at the colored Presbyterian Church, and visited black schools. Nichols missionized among the children in an attempt to get more students to attend his school. As the Washington population increased, Nichols' school received an influx of pupils and teachers. He made some initial contributions to the black community.

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[92] Nichols mentioned having a fellow black brother in the ministry (one who knows Latin, Greek, and Hebrew) take him to the Capital and show him around. However the friend was so insulted with "nigger" that the two had to leave. Another black man relates to his that the war is like the plagues if Egypt under the heading "a black man interprets God's providence." See D.B. Nichols to George Whipple, May 31, 1862 (15884), AMAA; Living on Capital Hill near the prison where the rebel and state prisoners were confined. Nichols mentioned how much things like dinner cost. Says he was a missionary for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society. Says he wrote letters for the monthly concerts which took place there. Spoke to several audiences including the orthodox Congregationalist, Baptist, about Port Royal experiment. He mentioned speaking the Rev. Reeds Congregation (Congregationalist) and that Whipple and Reed should meet one another at the Boston Anniversary meetings. See Rev. D.B. Nichols to S.S. Jocelyn, May 30, 1862 (15885), AMAA.

[93] Harrold, *Subversives*, 226-227.

Nichols attempted to rally both white and black support for the contraband. He attended the lectures of some of the leading New England reformist who appeared in the city. He often broke bread and sipped tea with some of the black ministers in order to gain entre into their pulpits. In one instance, Nichols noted the etiquette of his host minister recalling "the tea was seasoned well and served with the most proper etiquette." He said it reminded him of the way "Mrs. Whipple of Jersey City served it". He also noted that a lively discussion of God's Providence in relation to the history of the black man in this country erupted before he went to preach and return home.[94]

Nichols was present at an interracial meeting in a black church where he met George Needham, Secretary of the Senate Committee on the National Freedmen's Relief Association (NFRA). He went home with Needham for dinner and afterward the two attended the National Freedmen's Relief Association Committee meeting under the leadership of Vice President, Hannibal Hamlin. The agenda item that was intensely discussed was the plot to "send a colored brother, to Philadelphia and New York to obtain a vessel to transport a least one hundred contrabands quietly to the north to get them out of the 'clutches of Southern hounds.'" Nichols introduced himself and explained that the AMA sent him to Washington to "help the contraband". The committee, realizing an opportunity, unanimously agreed that Hamlin would call on General Wadsworth to make Nichols a special agent of the association and arranged for Nichols to go to New York to report to Lewis Tappan. After the meeting, Nichols was invited to assist on "Contraband Island" which was owned by Lorenzo D. Johnson, President of the

[94] D.B. Nichols to George Whipple, June 9, 1862 (15887), AMAA.

National Freedmen's Relief Association. Many of the committee members were glad that Nichols came to Washington because it signaled the commitment of the AMA to the Washington field.[99]

Nichols met with General Wadsworth who ordered him to visit and inspect the conditions of the "contraband quarters" at Duff's Green's Row. Nichols spent three hours touring the nearby camp and gathered his thoughts on the city's refugees. He reported that the newly arrived had "bright eyes" but were in serious need of his services. Before returning to General Wadsworth's quarters, he was sure to broadcast the dire need for freedmen services in the District as he prepared copies of his report for Hamlin and Whipple.

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[99] D.B. Nichols to George Whipple, March 24, 1862, (15880), AMAA; D.B. Nichols to George Whipple and Simeon Jocelyn, May 29, 1862 (15883), AMAA. D. B. Nichols to George Whipple, June 16, 1862 (15888), AMAA. The "Colored Brother" was Robert Smalls. Smalls, 1839 to 1915, was a Civil War navy pilot, politician, and businessmen. A slave near Beaufort, S.C. Smalls moved to Charleston where he was allowed to hire himself out by paying his owner fifteen dollars a month. The knowledge of coastal waterway that he gained as a boatman made possible one of the Civil War's most daring exploits. In 1862, the Confederate government made Smalls wheelman of the steamboat the Planter (the title "pilot" being deemed inappropriate for a slave). He learned the signals necessary to pass southern fortifications and the location of mines. On May 12, 1862, while white crew members were on shore, Smalls seized the opportunity to steer the ship, containing his family and a small group of other slaves, to Union lines. The news spread across the country. The coup was important militarily and symbolically, demonstrating what slaves – supposedly docile and content in their servitude – could accomplish. Awarded $1500 for armed boat and commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States colored troops, Smalls became pilot of the planter, participated in seventeen battles, and recruited for the army. During and after the war he raised funds in the North for black southerners' interests. Doggedly pursuing his own education, he bought schools for freedmen and while investing extensively in real estate and companies in his native state. Dramatic as Smalls's escape was, his later career constituted his greatest legacy. During the 12 years that Reconstruction allowed blacks southerners political opportunities, Smalls became a South Carolina state congressman and senator and then, for most of the years between 1874 and 1886, a U. S. Congressmen, known for his repartee. In the state legislature he sponsored bills for free compulsory public education. See Thomas Holt, *Black over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina During Reconstruction*. (Chicago: Oxford University Press, 1979). And Okon Edet Uya, From Slavery to Public Service: Robert Smalls, 1839 - 1915. New York, 1971.

In June 1862, Wadsworth appointed Rev. Danforth B. Nichols as Superintendent of Contrabands at the newly organized camp at the Duff Green's Row barracks on what is now East Capitol Street. Wadsworth believed his missionary zeal and experience in Iowa, running a boy's reform school in Chicago, and attempt to found a mission in the Georgia Sea Islands would help him to put the camp in a more credible condition than present. Wadsworth fixed Nichols' pay at two dollars per day, but Hamlin lobbied for a raise. Despite his new compensation, Nichols said he was an AMA missionary and would keep in contact with the organization at the Government's expense. The appointment gave the new superintendent who had been financially subsisting off of scant resources his first income since his arrival in the capital.[103]

Although he had left his wife and five children at Scituate Harbor, Massachusetts, he had worked without a commitment from the American Missionary Association about the salary. Nichols believed the Lord did not pay for rent and food and by May 30th his circumstances were so grave he had but $1.25 in cash. He felt fifty dollars per month was the minimum for living expenses in Washington, therefore viewing his appointment as superintendent as "the Lord's doing."[104]

Nichols' dreams of improving conditions for the contrabands were soon dashed. General Wadsworth told Mr. Wood to give the new superintendent "all the assistance in your power" to place the quarters "in a more credible condition." In spite of the introduction of

[103] Chilton, "City of Refuge,"169-170; Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 121, 139, 157

[104] D.B. Nichols to S.S. Jocelyn, May 30, 1862 (15885), AMAA; D.B. Nichols to Simeon Jocelyn, June 2, 1862 (15886), AMAA.

such sanitary measures as water, tubs, soap, and lime, the death rate remained high as more and more blacks arrived. Nichols reported as many as fifty arrived in one night.[107]

The initial accommodations proved to be inadequate as the newly freed were given residence in homes just blocks from the capitol. The establishment of refugee or "contraband" camps was the result of the overwhelming influx of new inhabitants into the city. The Union camps provided housing, basic assistance, and organized for service in the United States' war effort. Several camps were located in and around Washington. Duff Green's Farm was a formidable challenge to the missionary organization that entered the camp. Nichols remained busy as ever meeting the needs of the rising camp population and the ever increasing cases of death. Nichols reported that as many as seventeen people died in one week.[108]

In an effort to visit freed slaves who had migrated to the capital and then to report on their condition to Northern reformers, Harriet Jacobs, an ex-slave turned author and reformer, reported on the conditions and assessed the leadership of the camp. The morning after her arrival from Philadelphia 1862, she went to Duff Green's Row and "found men, women, and children all huddled together, without any distinction or regard to age or sex," she explained. "Some of them were in the most pitiable condition. Many were sick with measles, diphtheria [sic], scarlet and typhoid fever. Some had a few filthy rags to lie on; others had nothing but the bare floor for a couch." Her description included a make-shift hospital, but "there was no

[107] D.B. Nichols to George Whipple, June 28, 1862 (15892), AMAA.

[108] D.B. Nichols to George Whipple, July 2, 28, 1862 (15894), AMAA.

matron" and "nothing at hand to administer to the comfort of the sick and dying." She further reported, "There were, some days, as many as ten deaths reported at this place in twenty-four hours." Jacobs felt her roll was the make their sufferings known as she talked to a few of the patients and offered them clothing, blankets, and kind words. As one who disseminated information to William Lloyd Garrison, Jacobs realized that the military and government officials who had organized the camp probably did not know how badly the freedpeople were suffering. As she explained, "I felt that their sufferings must be unknown to the people." To her dismay, she found no one among the freedpeople "to soothe the last agonies of death." Jacobs reasoned that in army hospitals, chaplains and nurses comforted dying soldiers, but, there was no one by the sides of the sick and dying freed slaves. No example was more poignant of the need for convalescing care among the freedpeople than when she bent down to adjust a blanket or to offer a reassuring word, they looked up at her with "tearful eyes" that asked, "is this freedom?"[109]

The push of the countryside and the pull of the city drew many who sought freedom. Those outside the borders sensed an opportunity amidst the social and political upheaval. John H. Brooks, the founder and organizer of the Fifth Baptist Church (now Vermont Avenue Baptist Church), escaped from his master in Virginia during the Civil War and joined the Union Army. While in its ranks, he drove the wagon of a company that eventually disbanded in Washington. Similarly, Robert Johnson, the second pastor of the Fourth Baptist Church (now Metropolitan Baptist Church), escaped from his master's plantation in Westmoreland County, Virginia and

[109] Downs, *Sick from Freedom*, 162.

ended up on a sailing vessel headed for Alexandria, Virginia. He and his family walked to Washington from the northern Virginian city.[110]

In July 1862, Nichols attempted to curtail the number of deaths by moving the contrabands from the cramped and infected quarters at "Duff Green's Row" to the perimeter of the city. The new location was a military barracks at 12th Street and Vermont Avenue and was formerly occupied by Captain Barker, a commander of George Britton McClellan's Dragoons. For a moment, Camp Barker became a weigh station that resembled a village for social services. Along with organizing a hospital and laundry to service the soldiers, three Princeton students conducted the school and orphanage sponsored by the American Tract Society which garnered visitations from governors, senators, and other officials. Army personnel worked alongside northern abolitionists to secure food, shelter, and clothing for destitute contrabands who were unable to work or support themselves.[111]

The lure of the city was too strong despite the hardships, labor demands, and estrangement from family. Slaves who had been separated in slavery or by sale sought to use

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[110] A.W. Pegues, *Our Baptist Ministers and Schools* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1970), 249. Robert Johnson was born in 1836 in Westmoreland County, Virginia. He attended Wayland Seminary and Howard University Medical College in Washington, D.C. As pastor of the Metropolitan Baptist Church, Johnson lived at 2015 Vermont avenue, N.W. and was the father of Dr. John Hayden Johnson. See Daniel Lamb, *Howard University Medical Department: A Historical, Biographical, and Statistical Souvenir* (Washington, D.C.: R. Beresford, 1900), 249; Very little could be determined about the pre-war status of these ministers. Their status was gathered from short biographies. J.H. Brooks and Robert Johnson were slaves before the war. See Pegues*, Our Baptist Ministers and Schools*.

[111] Everly, "Freedmen's Bureau," 37; Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 185; Gladys Marie Fry, "The Activities of the Freedmen's Aid Societies in the District of Columbia, 1860-1870" (MA Thesis, Howard University, 1954), 68; Leech, *Reveille*, 249; Furgurson, *Freedom Rising*, 256-257.

the comparative safety of the contraband camps in the District of Columbia as a base to reconstitute their families. Once at Camp Barker, Nichols commented "they wish and seek to preserve family ties renewing again their relations as parents, children, husband, and wife whenever they are able. Those who did overcome many of the social obstacles by living with family and finding a job as a government wage laborer or in support adamantly defended their family's rights to remain free. When a slaveholder from Virginia was allowed into the contraband camp at Camp Barker to try to persuade his slaves to return, one elderly woman asked Nichols "to take this Butcher knife…..and let the wicked blood out of that man who has come to take my daughters." Despite the master's pleas of "Haven't you had your pig? And didn't I let you go to meeting?" none of his former slaves had any intention of returning. As Nichols commented following the meeting "These poor cowed children of oppression are beginning to assert in maintain their rights. God grant them success." [129]

In addition to the new arrivals from the outlying counties and beyond, many of those who entered the camp were relatives of black men who had entered the encampments in pursuit of work. Army officers, who were concerned about the draw on field resources like food and accommodations, sent black women and children to the city for protection and support while their kin worked. As the dependent multitude of relatives grew abundantly, Nichols registered and allotted passes for government protection, allocated rations, and employed four able-bodied men at forty cents a day at Army exchanges, military hospitals, and

[129] Chilton, "City of Refuge," 170 -171; Berlin et. al. ed., *Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: the Upper South*, 290; Berlin et. al. ed., *Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: the Upper South*, 290; D.B. Nichols to Simeon Jocelyn, August 7, 1862 (15896), AMAA.

in mending the worn roads for army transport. He coordinated efforts with the Quartermaster General to obtain soup, lime, bathtubs, and water piped in from the Potomac River. A new well provided "an abundance of the cold water," Nichols noted as he sought to relieve discomfort as five thousand blacks would eventually pass through the camp. [130]

The Union war complex needed black men and women to work for the war effort which influenced Congressional political policy to bolster the status of fugitive slaves to “contraband” laborers who provided justification for enacting emancipation in the District of Columbia. Once free, some entered the ranks of free laborers who were highly sought after by the Army of the Potomac. Quartermaster departments both headquartered in and around the District of Columbia, continually needed more laborers due to the drain of army recruitment on the white workforce. Officers clearly demonstrated a preference for contraband labor, the most sought after in the District. After the employment of fugitive slaves who made it to encampments, there remained a dearth of labor for which officers began looking to the city for additional contraband laborers. The benevolent societies hastily shifted into double time as they erected de facto employment agencies in “contraband camps” which directed the majority of able-bodied males towards the Union and the quartermaster department.[134]

Not only were able bodied men placed, but able-bodied women were placed too. Arrivals that were resourceful, including women with no more than one child to care for, were

[130] Green, *The Secret City*, 61-62.

[134] For an in-depth discussion of Nichols’s employment office, see Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 157 -159.

placed almost as soon as they arrived. Before emancipation in the district, many of the servants there were supplied from Maryland. Now there was a great demand for domestic help because many of the Chesapeake servants had fled to freedom. Nichols found most of the refugees anxious to work and help commenting that there were few "shirks" among them.[135]

The American Missionary Association's conception of free labor ideology was challenged by the District of Columbia labor market. Within the bureaucracy of the "new" labor arrangements, blacks were slow to be paid as Union Army officials were prone to be late in paying laborers on time despite the admonishment that contraband must learn to work diligently and industriously if they wanted to reap the rewards of being free workers. Moreover, the increased competition between new and veteran wage earners created a growing class of wage laborers who were helpless in gaining the needed wages to support their families in the District. Some Union officers took advantage of these circumstances and refused to pay their wages. Instead of paying Daniel Johnson for work performed, one Union officer drove him from the camp. The local community also took advantage of contraband and freedmen who eventually sought the help of Nichols. He witnessed the "sharks" taking advantage of those who emancipated themselves and testified "that from the moment the contraband lands [within] our lines he is the victim of fraud and robbery." In making the transition from Duff's Green to Camp Barker, Nichols told association officials how "land

[135] Clara DeBoer, *His Truth Is Marching On: African Americans Who The Freedmen for the American Missionary Association* (New York: Garland Publications, 1995), 85 -86; For a discussion of this historical phenomena see Chilton, "City of Refuge," and Barbara Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

sharks", which he politely called "hackmen" charged camp inhabitants $8.00 dollars to transport them one location to their new location.[136]

Although the camps represented freedom to the former slaves, the poor construction, filth, and disease dampened the spirits of some freedom seekers. Many of the diseases that devastated the military forces also afflicted the freedmen. In their visions of freedom, slaves never imagined emancipation as a tale of disease and sickness. At camps near Washington in 1863, for example, former slaves suffered from a lack of fresh and clean water. "The water inside the camp appears to produce diarrhea, and the wells in the neighborhood where we receive our supply from, are trying up," wrote surgeon Alexander T. Augusta.[141]

In addition to the search for food and shelter, there were many mounting problems for contraband in Washington. Destitute, unclothed, suffering, and sickly, contraband were taken advantage of and subjected to many abuses. From landlords demanding astronomical rents and hackmen charging exorbitant prices for transport to former masters seeking the protection of their property under the law, contraband and freedmen had to maneuver the city with extreme care. Even a military protection did not prevent their arrest as fugitives. For example, after receiving their papers from the Superintendent, five men went to the city to get their clothing when they were caught by their old masters who had four of them jailed. The fifth managed to escape to tell his story to Nichols who negotiated the release of the others.[142]

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[136] Chilton, "City of Refuge", 186-187.

[141] Downs*, Sick from Freedom*, 31.

[142] Everly, "Freedmen's Bureau", 38; Nichols to Jocelyn, August 7, 1862 (15896), AMAA; Nichols to Whipple, July 31, 1862 (15895), AMAA.

The promise that contrabands and freedmen attempted to realize in the "promised land" of the District of Columbia quickly turned to disillusionment. Poverty, reorientation between rural and urban living, along with the added responsibilities of looking after oneself and family, black migrants' march to freedom had seemingly placed them deeper into the wilderness. Yet they had no intention of returning to slavery, they expected the government to provide their basic needs as had their old masters. Mrs. Elizabeth Keckley, Mrs. Lincoln's mulatto dressmaker, formed an aid society and often visited the contrabands. In her opinion, contraband preferred slavery in the South to freedom in the North. She believed they spoke sincerely "because dependence had become a part of their second nature, and independence brought with it the cares and vexations of poverty." One woman complained she had been in Washington eight months and Mrs. Lincoln had never given her one shift, declaring, "Bliss God, children, if I had ar know dat de Government, and Mister and Missus Government, was going to do that ar way I neber would 'ave comed here in God's wurld."[144]

In reality, the government's aid was miniscule compared to the number who sought freedom in the city. Of the thousands of contrabands in the area, only about 600 lived at Camp Barker. But because of this government aid and the enormity of the population migrating into the city, on September 27, 1862, the Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, directed the Quartermaster General to deduct five dollars per month from the pay of colored teamsters who often earned as much as twenty or twenty-five dollars per month. The increase in the contraband fund was to be used to finance the hospital for the freedmen and cover the aid

[144] Everly, "Freedmen's Bureau," 38-39; Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind the Scenes* (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 140.

dispensed to the dependent women and children. It was nonetheless collected from all black employees regardless of whether they had relatives in the camp or were free before the war.[145]

To the chagrin of government officials, contraband laborers used their labor and skill to their advantage as they pressed Stanton to increase their wages. They argued that their labor had value and those who recruited contraband workers learned that the workers demanded like wages from the Army. Captain Thomas Gamble complained that it was nearly impossible to obtain enough men from the contraband camps because they could go wherever they wanted when the opportunity was presented and were prone to leave if there were offers for more pay. Black laborers commanded higher pay for jobs such as those who handled horses for the Army or even higher for those who worked in mills in Georgetown that paid twenty-five dollars per month. According to Nichols, contraband left government service after the government withheld taxes from their wages and they sought better wages working for private individuals in the city.[146]

Camp tension and frustration began to run high as Nichols juggled poor health, the financial strains of his family, and the lack of good will towards the contrabands in the city. He even managed to anger General Wadsworth who sought to have him removed, but he could not remove Nichols since he was appointed by the Secretary of War.[147] Few missionaries remained in the camp to work under such circumstances. Beginning work at dawn, work with

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[145] Ibid., 39.

[146] Chilton, "City of Refuge", 191; Berlin et. al., ed., *Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South*, 288, 297

[147] D.B. Nichols to Jocelyn, August 12, 1862 (15898), AMAA.

the freedmen was demanding, tiring and rarely ended before nine in the evening. Even the camp's physician noted that a barrack their size would be assigned three surgeons and three stewards. The constant influx of freedmen meant that someone was always in need of living quarters, clothing, or supplies. According to his colleagues, Nichols manifested "a bad spirit and act occasionally as if he was crazy." To make matters worse the Freedmen sometimes accused the workers of dishonesty or prejudice."[148]

When Brigadier General James Martindale replaced Wadsworth as military governor in November, 1862, the military's concern for the contrabands diminished. Conditions at Camp Barker became extremely dismal as disease and death increased. The National Freedmen's Relief Association was overwhelmed by the number of contrabands arriving in the Nation's Capital and sought to find a place for women who were entering the camp at "50 to 75 per day." There was concern from city residents that the black females entering the city would "poison them". The organization paid the salary of Dr. John Pettyjohn of Indiana to be the camp's physician. But the camp's little hospital hardly deserved the name, and it was common sight to see patients picking off their own vermin. By the first of December an epidemic of smallpox forced the closing of the school. Of the 3,354 contraband that had passed through Barker by that date, 311 had died.[149]

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[148] Rachel Patten to Jocelyn, December 20, 1862 (15910, 15911), AMAA; Rachel Patten to Jocelyn, December 11, 1862 (15909), AMAA; Rachel Patten to Jocelyn, February 12, 1863 (15916), AMAA; Everly, "Freedmen's Bureau", 65.

[149] Nichols to Jocelyn, September 5, 1862 (15903), AMAA; H. Hamlin to Jocelyn, September 6, 1862 (15904), AMAA; Rachel Patten to Jocelyn, September 1862 (15905), AMAA; Nichols to Jocelyn, December 3, 1862 (15908), AMAA; Downs, *Sick from Freedom*, 94-95, 99; Everly, "Freedmen's Bureau", 39.

The bad conditions at the camp were due to both a lack of proper facilities and the poor administration of Nichols. One of the female volunteers maintained that "Dr. Pettyjohn was not the man for this place. He was not a man to act without someone to push him, and Mr. N[ichols] is not the man to urge things ahead." She believed anyone under Dr. Pettyjohn's care was "to be pittied". During December a committee from the Society of Friends of New York investigated matters at the camp and "awakened" the military governor to conditions there. Dr. Daniel Breed, a Quaker and one of Washington's longtime abolitionists, replaced Dr. Pettyjohn as camp physician, with the latter remaining to tend the smallpox victims. General supervision of the hospital was given to the medical director of the Defenses of Washington.[150]

Personnel changes alone did nothing to alleviate the misery at Barker. By the middle of January five hundred new freedmen had arrived at the already over-crowded and muddy camp where smallpox raged. Many freedmen feared sending members of their family to the smallpox "hospital," located in tents north of the camp, often trying to conceal victims of the disease.

There was great sickness in Washington. Typhoid and typhus fevers abounded. Smallpox was also alarmingly common. It was a virulent epidemic; one-fourth of the nearly 400 cases in 1862 were fatal. Even Nichols' children fell ill. "Several well-known persons died of the smallpox within a few days, and our physicians report it is on the increase. The cause was the abominable carelessness of certain Government employees who carried soldiers through the

[150] Rachel Patton to Jocelyn, February 12, 1863 (15916), AMAA; Rachel Patton to Jocelyn, January 16, 1863 (15915), AMAA; Downs, *Sick from Freedom*, 99; Rachel Patton to Simeon Jocelyn, January 21, 1863 (15910), AMAA.

most populous of our streets. The sanitary condition of the army is not what it should be, and there is room for all the energy of the Sanitary Commission if the city and the army are to save from almost universal sickness."[156]

By this time, missionaries who were eager to enlist into AMA service had relocated to the city. Rachel G. C. Patten and Mary Jane Doxey (both white) had worked in the contraband camps as AMA missionaries since the summer of 1862. As they were openly exposed to smallpox, they reported to AMA staff their assessment of the situation, which often differed sharply from Nichols' observation. Their reports suggested how the AMA could better account for its service to the city's black population. Many criticized Nichols' running of the school and some requested work "away from" him.[157]

Patten and Doxey boarded with the family of Dr. Lorenzo D. Johnson, surgeon at Lincoln Hospital, until Johnson became "timid" about smallpox. Realizing no one would board them, they moved into a frame house within the camp and began dispensing clothing. Their living quarters was "more like a very common stable" than a house, through the most generous cracks the wind whistled. But the missionaries at least had an adequate supply of blankets, and felt guilty about the paucity of blankets for the people in the tent hospital. Professing not to mind the inconvenience, Ms. Patten admitted: "no money could tempt us to live [within] the

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[156] *Independent*, January 9, 1862; For an in-depth discussion of disease in Washington, D.C., see Downs, *Sick from Freedom*, 69, 95, 105, 113, 165, and 209n1B.

[157] Everly, "*Freedmen Bureau*," 65 - 66; Rachel Patten to Jocelyn, November 15, 1862 (15907), AMAA; Rachel Patten to Simeon Jocelyn, January 21, 1863 (15915), AMAA.

camp, and so we say yet, but duty to God and interest for the people can do that for us, that money cannot".[158]

Patten marveled at how black residents of the city showed their support for the contrabands by donating goods to camps and raising funds to provide for orphan children and the sick. As the primary teacher of the orphanage at Camp Barker, she recalled that "the colored people of Washington made me a present of a cooking stove for them with all the apparatus. It costs upwards of twenty dollars. They take great pride in my children."[159]

Rachel Patten visited all the smallpox cases in the camp as well as some in the hospitals. Many were ill with other diseases. While Mary Jane Doxey distributed food, clothing, and job opportunities, Patton became deeply involved with caring for the sick. When she thought of their work as "salting" away their lives, she concluded that no one could have forced her and Doxey to do what they did. Johnson told them God had sent them to Washington to which Patton replied that if he had not, then they wanted to return "as soon as possible." Eventually, tired, distraught, and convinced her fellow workers were all against her, she left her mission after laboring for two months. She lamented that amid the mud, dirt, and sickness at Camp Barker sorely missed the clean and orderly white society she had left. Patten reminisced that writing and lecturing about the evils of slavery was easier and more inspiring than working with the poor in the primitive government camps.[160]

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[158] Rachel Patten to Jocelyn, January 21, 1863 (15915), AMAA.

[159] Ibid.; Chilton, "City of Refuge,", 204.

[160] Ibid.

The city's white churches showed signs of an "alarming agitation" over the pending issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. At Trinity Episcopal Church, three of the clergymen refused to read a prayer prepared by Bishop Whittingham, thanking God for recent federal victories. Rev. Mr. Sayles, one of the ministers who refused to read the prayer, was deposed by majority of the vestry of the Church.[161] Those who objected to reading the prayers declared that it is not the language of the prayer they objected to, but the idea that the Bishop had the right to dictate the prayer to them. "Yet it is a strange fact that all how well-known union Episcopal clergymen raised no such objection, while those who to have long been suspected of being disloyal."[162] Many Confederate sympathizers held high hopes that the Confederacy would triumph and Washington would remain under their control in lieu of the passage of the Emancipation Bill.

The city's confederate sympathizers' hopes were dashed as former slaves were drawn to worship, free from white supervision, in the District of Columbia's black churches. By 1862 there were already fifteen different churches in Washington, including eleven black Methodist churches, three Baptist churches, and one Presbyterian Church. With a combined membership upwards of 3850 before the black migration to the city, the majority of new arrivals were generally drawn towards seeking community within Baptist congregations whose freedom, leadership, and polity paralleling what they preferred in emancipation. The fellowship which followed services attracted upwards of 300 parishioners. Of all the churches, the largest

[161] *Independent*, April 3, 1863

[162] Ibid.

congregation of 600 members was Asbury Methodist Episcopal with its church and school located at the corner of 11th and K streets. Asbury employed a white pastor but four of the remaining five churches had black pastors.

During the antebellum period, blacks worked together to build a stable and prosperous free black community. The churches and affiliated institutions that the secular and sacred community built and nurtured soon became a major part of the attraction of the District to slaves and free blacks alike. Free blacks left their rural homes for the city in order to worship in peace at the independent black churches established in the District. Slaves from rural areas cherished their assignments to the city, where they could attend churches with black preachers and find fellowship and friendship with free blacks. As the black community in the District of Columbia grew larger and stronger, so did the number of runaway slaves who made for the city seeking aide and shelter. The growth of the black community and institutions in the District of Columbia thus paralleled and fuelled the attraction of the city to slave and free black migrants. All along the spectrum of migration, from slaves who were forced to move to the city to free blacks who were voluntary migrants in search of opportunities and freedoms, migrants to the District were drawn by support and protection of the growing black community.[163]

If the new arrivals did not find a church home to suit their praxis, they founded new churches. The founding of Shiloh Baptist Church in 1863 was such a church formed by former slaves who were evacuated from Fredericksburg to the District where they created a new church to serve the members of their former congregation, first establishing a Sunday school in

[163] Chilton, "City of Refuge", 31.

the capital on O street between 16th and 17th streets NW and eventually building a new frame structure to house their sanctuary.[164]

[164] In 1863, G.W. Samson, pastor of Washington's First Baptist Church and president of George Washington University, constituted a body of white Baptists at the First Baptist Church to recognize Shiloh Baptist Church as organized in the city and ordain William J. Walker as its pastor. Walker, a native of Fredericksburg, Virginia who was born of free parents, proved adept in planting churches. He went on to found Enon, Mt. Zion, Mt. Jezreel, and Zion Baptist Churches along with the Baptist Sunday School Union. He also was the owner of seven properties valued at $25,651 in 1860. See Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 76 - 77. Arguably, the religious topography of the Washington, D.C. has been one of the most neglected studies when considering the nation's capital. Scholars who subscribe to Marxian philosophy that "religion is the opiate of the people," have not presented comprehensive data to better understand the significance of religion and churches to the political, social, economic, labor, and educational movements during this era. A comprehensive look at black church in the District of Columbia reveals four more church than stated in Boyd's Directory. With the sizeable increase in the black population in the District of Columbia, the Independent black church movement had reached a notable point by 1862 as blacks supported fifteen churches - Israel Bethel Colored Methodist (A.M.E. in 1820 but M.E. South in 1836), Little Ebenezer M.E. (1820), Mount Zion M.E. (1830), Metropolitan Wesley A.M.E.Z. (1833), Asbury M.E. (1836), Union Bethel (later Metropolitan A.M.E.) (1838), St. Paul's A.M.E. (1839), Nineteenth Street Baptist (1839), Second Baptist (1840), Fifteenth Street Presbyterian (1844), Union Wesley A.M.E.Z. (1848), John Wesley A.M.E.Z. (1849), John Wesley A.M.E. (1849), Third Baptist (1857), and Galbraith A.M.E.Z. (1859). According to John C. Cromwell, "The First Negro Churches in the District of Columbia," Journal of Negro History 7, (1922), 64-104. A Few of the Churches he mentions were pastored by white ministers. *Boyd's City Directory* 1860 of Washington and Georgetown Listed 11 black churches. *Boyd's City Directory* 1860, the National Archives. The historiography of black religion includes the argument that slavery created a culture of dependence on the masters. However, others scholars presented a more balanced view: "The slave had many referents for self-esteem, for instance, other than his master. In religion, a slave exercised his own independence of conscience." Religion also helped preserve the mental health of the slaves. See Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*, 3rd ed., rev. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976) and John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, 310-311. Also to further understand the origins of slave religion from the standpoint of cultural anthropology, see Albert J. Raboteau's *Slave Religion*. Blassingame's *Slave Community*, offers the most helpful discourse on the psychological value of slave religion. Eugene D. Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books. 1974) 202-284, provides an interpretation of the slaves' social and psychological condition and the evangelical response to it. Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, 136-236, however, offers an analysis that is thorough and undergirded by knowledge of Southern religious history. The work of John B. Boles, *Black Southerners, 1619-1869* is an august historical introduction to the general life and culture of antebellum black southerners. For a compact understanding of black religious development during slavery in the United States, including insight into religious synthesis, centers of communal and psychic solace, prophetic consciousness, deep moral and religious redemption, the resistance to "thingafication", freedom, dissent, protest, and the importance of political cosmology in forming their own internal social world as a response to their oppressors' actions which shaped the cultural milieu of the slaves, see James Melvin Washington's *Frustrated Fellowship*, ix-xv. Realizing there was a substantial black constituency, black religious leaders began to encourage their followers to do for themselves as Southern urban culture was restructured. Many of the leaders sprang from the Baptist denomination of Protestants. Baptist, as well as members of other denominations, began organizing national denominations and conventions to meet the demands of its black constituency. By 1863 a single black Baptist national convention of nearly 100 churches with more than 100,000 members was envisioned and by 1866 it had solidified. In the period 1864 – 1866 Baptist leaders, both black and white, were preoccupied with the challenge of more than four million

The independent black church movement in Washington began long before blacks migrants arrived. As early as 1814 black Methodist in Georgetown sought the financial help of a devout white man to build the Mount Zion Methodist Negro Church. While it functioned under the auspices of a white congregation for some years, members of Mount Zion worshipped autonomously. Richard Allen, realizing the city's fertile ground while founding the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) denomination in 1816, initiated a trend of church planting free black churches in cities and towns across the mid-Atlantic. Israel Bethel Church was organized in 1820 when black members of the Ebenezer Methodist Episcopal Church grew tired of being subject to the spiritual guidance of a slave owning pastor and having to sit on pew

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freed slaves: how to evangelize them, educate them, and help them reorganize their religious lives. Following the lead of the predominantly white American Baptist Home Mission Society which resolved to begin work among black refugees in the District of Columbia and "in other places" held by Union forces at its 1862 meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, the black American Baptist Missionary Convention secured permission in August of 1863 from President Lincoln himself "to go within our military lines and minister to their brethren there." A twenty-five-year-old convention was comprised of mostly immigrants from the South, mainly Virginia, and unashamedly maintained that it had not waited on white abolitionists to begin mission work among black Southerners. A circular letter drafted by Rufus Lewis Perry in 1865 emphasized the prevalence of black workers in the Southern mission field. It underscored the belief that black Baptists were God's new reapers:

> The Harvest Field is so marked off by geographical boundaries and local peculiarities that the labor of certain places devolves particularly upon certain laborers. Then, again, relative and denominational characteristics and interests enjoin the laborers of certain fields or localities upon certain classes and denominations. This is emphatically true of the Southern field of labor to which we are to give special attention. All whom we allude are of the same race, and perhaps, a great majority, professing Christianity, of the same denominational [Baptist] faith. Then, our duty as a denomination, and more especially as a Missionary convention, is plain, We must occupy the fields as effectually as possible."

For this and an analysis of the rise and fall of the District of Columbia's National Theological Institute See Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship*, 53-54, 60, 76, 87-95.

seats in the gallery. As the city's population eclipsed its hallmark of 4,048 in the 1820s, several independent clack churches were founded in the 1830s and 1840s including Metropolitan Wesley A.M.E.Z. Church, Asbury M.E. Church, Union Bethel (later Metropolitan A.M.E.) Church, St. Paul's A.M.E. Church, Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, Second Baptist Church, Union Wesley A.M.E.Z. Church, John Wesley A.M.E.Z. Church, and John Wesley A.M.E. Church.[165]

One of the leading figures in the community was John F. Cook, Jr. He would become one of the delegates to Abraham Lincoln and the first African American elected to citywide office. Born in 1833, Cook educated in his father's school before moving on to New York's Central College and Oberlin College in Ohio. Returning to Washington, Cook was an active Freemason and became unusually successful in business and politics. In 1840, John F. Cook and John Freeman, members of Israel AME (formally Israel Church) establish a new congregation known as Bethel A.M.E. Church. Not satisfied with the polity of the A.M.E. Church, Cook demitted himself from the church and was licensed to preach and instruct by the Synod of the Presbyterian Church, North in 1841. John F. Cook began instructing students in his basement schoolroom but as word spread about his expertise many of the leaders of the black community were attracted to his teaching and encouraged the establishment of the Fifteenth Street Colored Presbyterian Church.[166]

Sandy Alexander was also very active during this period. Born in 1818, Alexander fled

[165] Chilton, "City of Refuge", 91-92; Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 85.

[166] Chilton, "City of Refuge", 91-92; Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 85; Masur, *An Example for All the Land*, 20-21.

Virginia and sought freedom in the District of Columbia after his manumission at the age of twenty five. While in the city, Alexander worked nights and attended day school taught by Mrs. Charlotte Gordon on the corner of 14th and G Streets. On October 22, 1849, Alexander, age 34, secured the one hundred and fifty dollar deed to Arthur and Maria, his children who were held in the "Georgia" pen in Alexandria, Virginia. During the Antebellum period, the three lived as a family until Alexander posthumously fulfilled his ten-year service (for their freedom) to his former master. After establishing possession of his children from Taylor H. Allen, Alexander freed them on the following day. He later entered Columbia College (now George Washington University) for theological training and was called to the pastorate of the Second Baptist Church on the eve of the Civil War. Founding several churches in Washington and Georgetown, Alexander became one of the most prominent black ministers in Washington, D.C., during Reconstruction.[167]

Black Washingtonians developed impressive religious and civic organization in the Antebellum era, but civil relations were always constructed from strictures of slavery and black codes. Whites scrutinized black organizations with black codes and police authority to force many black associations to the periphery of public life. Black codes placed on black civic life were an inconvenience and a humiliation. One of the central reactions of local citizenry was to

[167] Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C., Records of the Recorder of Deeds, JAS 8, 1848-1851, 98-100; A.W. Pegues, *Our Baptist Ministers and Schools* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970), Appendix, 1-3. More detail about the life of Sandy Alexander and many other black ministers during this period can be found in *Our Baptist Ministers and Schools*.

form and cultivate associations. With access denied to public space and other public accommodations for the black community, the black churches – open to both secular and religious groups in the community – came to signify public space. It housed a diversity of programs including schools, lyceums, political clubs, lodges, secret societies, orchestras, employment centers, worship theatre, publishing house and mutual aid society. The church served as public space for virtually every large gathering. The church was a discursive center, critical arena – a public sphere in which values and issues were aired, debated, and disseminated throughout the larger black community. It was the one space truly accessible to the black community, and it was this characteristic that led W.E.B. DuBois, long before E. Franklin Frazier, identified the black church as a multiple site.[168]

Despite the white hostility and the enactment of black codes, Black churches nurtured vibrant association life. The first chapter of the Oddfellows was founded in 1846, and in 1855 a group of men who had been scholars at the Union Seminary founded the John F. Cook Lodge of Oddfellows. Other benevolent associations birthed out of black churches, like the Asbury Aid Association, which was formed to assist free blacks who lost their home or businesses during the Snow Riot. It later raised funds to establish the Asbury Methodist Church and the school of the same name. Some benevolent societies sought to reform and uplift the black community,

[168] Katherine Masur, *An Example for All the Land*, 20-21; Scholars have been quick the use E. Franklin Frazier's description of the black church as an institution of status, classism, and intragroup separatism. Recent scholars of the independent black church movement favor W.E.B. DuBois' analysis which concluded, long before Frazier reached his popular critique, that the movement gave rise to its own public sphere. See Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 7.

like the Temperance Society formed at the Union Bethel A.M.E. other societies harnessed the organizing power of church women to raise funds for their members. The Female Union Band, an association formed by free black women of the Mount Zion United Methodist Church raised funds to purchase a cemetery plot for its members and their families to secure a proper church burial.[169]

Tensions created by the influx of new black migrants also found their way into the black community in the District of Columbia. Initially, the established black community in the District, based in the black churches had been founded during the antebellum period sought to welcome the newcomers and help them adjust to life in the city. They felt a special duty to aid these fugitives from slavery and lift them out of destitution. Free blacks from the District of Columbia sought to provide their own worthiness as citizens by emphasizing the responsibility as well as the rights of the freedom to the newcomers.

In the spring of 1862, the Board of Trustees of the Union Bethel Church and Washington's set aside room in the basement of the church to begin collecting provisions and clothing to be distributed among fugitive slaves from Maryland and Virginia arriving in the city. As their supplies were quickly exhausted, members voted to establish a more permanent organization in September 1862 called the Union Relief Association. Members consider it "our special duty with sincere affection to soothe the sorrows of our unhappy brethren, to relieve their wants, to sympathize with their misfortunes, to compassionate their miseries and to

[169] Chilton, "City of Refuge", 78.

restore peace to the trouble mind." Leaders from the church trouble to the North to solicit donations from friends in other black churches and the Association began to distribute supplies to the needy in the city.[170]

Also in September 1862, several prominent free black women, including the determined Keckley, formed a Contraband Relief Association to tend to the needs of the poor blacks in the District. Women had been active members of many northern abolitionist societies and both white and black and continued to support the emerging freedmen's aid movement. Watching white women organize a festival for wounded soldiers, Keckley wondered "why should not the well-to-do colored people go to work to do something for the benefit of the suffering blacks."[171]

The women of the Contraband Relief Association were able to press their connection to the White House in order to secure funds and patronage from Mrs. Lincoln. Christmas festivities in 1862 at the Contraband camp were sponsored by Mrs. Lincoln although the outbreak of smallpox at the camp prevented her from attending in person. Nonetheless, "Mrs. Lincoln, our president's lady presented the contrabands with forty-five turkeys, apples, cranberries and other good things."[172]

As the winter unfolded, circumstances in the camp became dire. Tired of camp relations sinking deeper into stagnation, General Martindale had Captain James Ferree, a Methodist

[170] Ibid, 203.

[171] Ibid, 203.

[172] Ibid, 204.

minister who had been serving as a chaplain at the U.S. General Hospital at Fort Monroe, reassigned to Camp Barker in January, 1863. Nichols interpreted the detail as the end his administration and smugly told the America Missionary Association that he and Ferree "got on comfortably all things considered even though the new commandant was "not a worker nor a great in executive quality."[173]

Ferree had to quickly stabilize the conditions at Camp Barker. Nichols continually bickered with Breed to the point that the demoted superintendent thought Breed's stay at Barker "was to be a thorn in the flesh." Nichols resigned, but General Martindale persuaded him to remain. Ferree ultimately asked for Breed's removal. When the latter refused to resign, he was ordered to give up the administration of the hospital. Although he pleaded with the AMA for a black chaplain for those dying from smallpox, Nichols further fell into disfavor with many of the new arrivals. They believed he accepted money, hired out children, and allowed many freedmen, including children in poor health, to leave the camp while stricken with smallpox.[174]

Despite the sour relations between him and the administration of the camp, Nichols believed he remained steadfast in support of the black population. He often preached to the very same religious congregants and ran their prayer meetings during the week. Nichols recalled how his black constituents often prayed for the success of the Union Army and for the

[173] Nichols to Whipple, March 21, 1863 (H 1-4691), AMAA.

[174] Rachel Patten to Jocelyn, November 15, 1862 (15906), AMAA.

President of the United States and they stirred up so much emotional fervor that even he could not keep silent. "My spirit," he said "was obliged to speak, for the word of God was like a fire in my bones."[175]

The celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863 revealed much about the population that entered the camp and the potential barriers to what had been learned during slavery. The Thursday had ended with music, guns, and Superintendent Nichols reading the Emancipation Proclamation to the fugitive slaves under his care. Several hundred gathered together, and began by lining a hymn with "John the Baptist" as if the old camp meeting was about to process. John the Baptist was recognized as the leader of the contraband's religious exercises. For a man of sixty years of age, he was described as having rugged, intelligent, grizzled features and a good deal of character. He had a martial presence that was indicative of the military overcoat he wore.[176]

The hymn, or 'hime,' was sung in full chorus by women, who were mostly congregated by themselves, keeping time by the wide-swaying motion familiar to those who have witnessed a negro camp-meeting, and the venerable leader, as he sung, extending his arms over the crowd in a sort of "wild enthusiasm." A women within the flock took up the theme, and raised the popular hymn, 'Go Down Moses,' (keeping time with head, hand, and foot) each piece was sung with fervor that indicated there may have been truth and light in what was intimated.

[175] D.B. Nichols to Simeon Jocelyn, August 7, 1862 (15896), AMAA.

[176] *The Independent*, January 8, 1963.

One observer reported, it was as if they were singing the “the negro Marseillaise the National (if not revolutionary) Hymn”.[177]

The who had gathered for the impromptu camp meeting identified their condition with that of the Israelites in Egypt as typical of their own condition in slavery, and allusions to Moses, Pharaoh, the Egyptian as task-masters, and the unhappy condition of the captive Israelites, were continuously inferred; after the reference to the triumphant escape of the Israelites across the Red Sea, and the destruction of their pursuing masters, certainly brought out a strong 'Amen.'"[178]

Nichols chimed in and explained to those who had gathered the southern counties that were rendered free by the proclamation. When he said that North Carolina was free, quite a number showed their elation by raising their arms and shouting. When certain counties in Virginia were mentioned as under the proclamation, men and women would sprang to their feet and exclaimed, "Dat's me!" "Dar's whar I'se cum from!" "Bress God! Oh, Bress de God for dat!"[179]

After the reading of the proclamation, William Beverly, a contraband, led in prayer: "Let thy blessing rest on everything belonging to the United States President, who has bestowed such gifts on us right this night. We were bound as slaves. Chains on our hands, We have seen our people bound in chains, and carried away, Some got mothers in foreign lands. Some got

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Ibid.

fathers in foreign lands. Jesus! bless the President. Lay down with him this night, I pray God; rise in the morning with him! God bless the Union army wherever it may be. God Almighty, go with our people; lead us along in this dark, howling wilderness! Make us good. We pray for our brother still in the South. Jesus, stan' by dem! Lord, be with dem in the most particular moment. Lord Almighty, make us willing to obey the United States President as much as do the soldiers as come to break the chains. We were bruised and dragged about. Let us lay down our lives for those who break slavery chains from our necks. Let de war be pushed on. Bress dem who have just run away and cum here - and bress all."[180]

Upon closing with prayers, over three hundred voices joined in a great intense and emotional chorus with a deep-hollow-voiced elderly man who struck up a song: "I'm a free man now; Jesus Christ has made me free!" A woman led off with a new song, "There will be no task-masters," and in a very few moments the newly emancipated “caught music and words, and sang with her with powerful effect”.[181]

John the Baptist, William Beverly, and the chorus of freedmen provide a glimpse into the spirituality of those who sought freedom in the city. Little did they know that the very arch which had shuttled them into the city would be called upon to provide shelter as their existence in the city would begin to unravel.[182]

The emotions of one pastor during this historic occurrence provide the significance of

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[180] Ibid.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Furguson, *Freedom Rising*, 220.

the moment. The Reverend Henry McNeal Turner rushed to join the crowd around the printing office where the proclamation was being set in type. He grabbed the first sheet out of the door, but it was ripped away, and the second was torn apart by other eager hands. Making away with a third, he raced panting down the avenue to his church. When ho got there, he was too breathless to read it with great deliberation. Around him "men squealed, women fainted, dogs barked, white and [black] people shook hands, songs were sung," Turner wrote. Hundreds, black and white, paraded before the White House where the president came to the window and took a modest bow. "Rumor said that the very thought of being set at liberty and having no more auction blocks, no more separation of parents from children, was so heart gladdening that scores of colored people literally fell dead with joy," Turner wrote. "Nothing like it will ever be seen again in his life."[183]

By April 1863, three thousand contrabands were given government or private service, principally as servants and laborers. Despite Nichols' questionable record as an employment agent, Camp Barker was soon subjected to overcrowding and compounding health problems. Of those who did not find positions prior to April 1863, approximately seven hundred had died and another one thousand still crowded the camp. As a consequence of overcrowding, and due to frequent raids by Maryland slave owners in search of runaway bondsmen, Camp Barker was broken up and a series of new camps were established in and around Washington. With the development of Freemen's Village, the number of deaths at Camp Barker declined.[185]

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[183]Ibid, 219-220.

[185] Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 199-200.

Chapter 4
Missionary Zeal in the Urban South

On a hill perched just south of the Potomac River, a freedmen's relief camp was established in the spring of 1863 on part of the plans to confiscate the Arlington estate of Confederate General Robert E. Lee. In an effort to make the growing number of dependent contrabands more self-sufficient, the able-bodied, including women and children, were employed on the farm land and in workshops on the Custis-Lee estate. The camp eventually evolved into a model community known as Freedmen's Village. The change in location brought immediate benefits to the contrabands. The number of deaths among them dropped from an average of 3 ½ a day at the crowded, muddy Camp Barker to two a day at Arlington. The figure was still high but the improvement was undeniable.[23]

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[23]Isaac Cross to Jocelyn, October 13, 1863 (15962), AMAA; For the establishment of Green Heights or Freedmen's Village see Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 122; For a preliminary look at the work of Congregationalist among freedmen see Percel O. Alston, "The Afro-Christian Connection" and Clara Merritt DeBoer, "Blacks and the American Missionary Association" in Barbara Brown Zikmund, ed., *Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ* (New York: United Church Press, 1984); A. Knight Stanley, *The Children Is Crying: Congregationalism Among Black People* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1979); Joel Williamson, "Why the American Missionary Association Failed in the South," *Southern Studies* (Spring 1979): 51-73; Richard Bryant Drake, "The American Missionary Association and the Southern Negro, 1861 – 1888" (Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1957); Clifton Herman Johnson, "The American Missionary Association , 1846 – 1861: A Study of Christian Abolitionism"; and Clara Merritt DeBoer, *Be Jubilant My Feet* and *His Truth Is Marching On.* For an understanding of what other denominations were doing to meet the growing demand of freedmen see Clarence Walker's *Rock in a Weary Land*; William B. Gravely, *The Social, Political, and Religious Significance of the Foundation of the Colored Methodist Church…Georgia in Black and White: Exploration in the Race Relations of a Southern state, 1850 – 1950* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia) and *Gilbert Havens, Methodist Abolitionist: A Study in Race, Religion and Reform, 1850 – 1880* (Nashville: Abington, 1971). For a more extensive reference to Gravely's scholarship, see Clarence Walker, *Rock in a Weary Land*, note 30. Bishop William Jacob Walls, *The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: Reality of the Black Church* (Charlotte NC: A.M.E. Zion Publishing House, 1974) 185 – 202. Andrew E. Murray, *Presbyterians and the Negro – A History*; Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Presbyterians: The Heritage and Hope* (Philadelphia: Geneva Press, 1983); For insight into the foundation of Roman Catholic work during this period begin with Albert J. Raboteau,

In December of 1862, Nichols previewed his plan that he believed would promote independence, resourcefulness, and instill the ideals of Christian family living along with providing freedmen with the "arts of life." The plan involved organizing companies of three to five hundred people into temporary places of residence until the freedmen showed marked improvement in assimilating into society. A new location, one rural rather than urban, required the removal of the thousands who had settled into the urban camp dwelling. Nichols needed the resources of the military Department of Washington for its implementation.

Across the Potomac, Nichols and Lieutenant Colonel Elias M. Greene, Chief quartermaster for the Military Department of Washington set about creating a Military "Department" that would accept official responsibility for the former slaves and encompass the surrounding countryside as well as the capital city. A continuation of the Washington Freedmen's "department" that he helped create with Greene, Nichols envisioned removing the "dead weight" of idle souls on the government and creating a sphere where "families could live together, and even the children and the elderly could cultivate vegetable gardens. Greene recommended Nichols as the man most qualified to be the Superintendent and in May 1863 the plan came to fruition when the commandant of Barker transferred one hundred freedmen to the Custis-Lee estate in Arlington, Virginia.

Slave Religion: The invisible Institution in the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 111-14, 271 -75; John W. Blassingame, *Black New Orleans, 1860-1880* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973) 173 – 210; John T. Gillard, *The Catholic Church and the American Negro*…(Baltimore: St. Joseph's Society Press, 1930) 10 – 45; and James Hennesey, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) 161- 63, 182, 193.

By the summer of 1863, following the flood of arrivals since the declaration of the Emancipation Proclamation, deteriorating conditions in the Washington camps prompted military authorities to establish Freedmen's Village on the northern Virginia estate. Union troops had seized the property during the first weeks of the war and had begun burying their dead comrades there in the aftermath of the first battle of Bull Run. The location outside the city gibed with the attempt to settle freedmen way from the city and putting them to work in the open air.[24]

Resembling the plantations of South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana, the new freedmen's "department" established farm camps on the land the government owned or leased through confiscation. Headquarters on the Arlington estate began Freedmen's Village and opened Camp Springdale in June. Camp Rucker, situated on 600 acres of farm land in nearby Falls Church, opened the following year and had a combined population with Camp Springdale of 600 inhabitants. Camp Wadsworth was established on land between Langley and Lewinsville, Virginia, just beyond the western boundary of the District of Columbia in the same year. Camp Collins was located near Chain Bridge. The District of Columbia and county also maintained its share of the smaller camps located just south of Washington. For a short time, one was located near the present location of Howard University, and another occupied a site located in southwest Washington, close to the Navy Yard where several of its residents were employed. Mason's Island (now Roosevelt Island), situated in the Potomac off Georgetown,

[24] Everly, "*Freedmen's Bureau*," 47-48.

was used as a depot for refugee contrabands in addition to a training center for black troops during the later years of the war.[25]

Although the freedmen quickly adapted to their new topographical surrounding by nightly encamping in rustic cabins and tents and cultivated crops of hay, corn, fodder, and vegetables under the supervision of civilian overseers and assistant superintendents. It was not long after when similar difficulties that plagued Camp Barker such as cleanliness and overcrowding began to beleaguer the rural enterprise. Rev. J.R. Johnson, a representative of the American Missionary Association, zeroed in on the camps need for improvement in cleanliness and "proper arrangements for obeying the calls of nature." When General Hooker's regiment decamped, freedmen were brought from other camps around Springdale to reside, thus worsening an already bad situation. One physician in residence told the AMA leadership: "You can imagine what the moral influence must be of this. Again, every rain that comes drenches them so that any attempt to do them good physically is discouraging."[26]

The initial agricultural success of the Village led Nichols and Greene to broaden the effectiveness of the camp. Both believed strongly that their model was the prototype for the War department's accommodation of the freedmen throughout the country. Nichols had approximately fifty dwellings, a story and a half in height, built on the Arlington grounds for the occupancy of two families each. The area was mapped out with streets according to names of prominent government officials or generals. A hospital, home for the indigent, schools

[25] Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 122.

[26] Everly, *Freedmen's Bureau*, 46-47.

supported by the American Tract Society, and chapel that was fittingly named after George Whipple, the AMA secretary, was erected along with centers for the industrial arts. A few shops allowed men to master carpentry and blacksmithing while women used the needle and the sewing machine to complement the camp's division of labor.[27]

The government directly supervised and controlled those who were under their control. Able-bodied freedmen were employed on government farms. Their wages of $10 per month were subject to $5 deductions for the contraband fund which allocated resources for food, clothing, and shelter for the less than able-bodied freedmen.[28]

Camp official's control over the freedmen harkened back to a time when the slave master and mistress controlled all aspects of their livelihood. Camp officials control the necessities of life in order to reform freedmen's habits in favor of regular and industrious labor. In addition to food, clothing, and blankets, housing was allocated to the gainfully employed. Camp officials were clear, on the other hand, that idlers would not receive the benefits of freedom and would be expelled, with force if necessary.

Rents that were due remained a battleground between former slaves and the Yankee officials. Freedmen viewed rents as an impediment to freely support themselves. However, camp officials viewed rents of $1 to $3 per month as minimal. To the freedmen rents were an unwelcomed source of paternalism, especially in light of the $5 monthly contraband-fund tax. Moreover, the freedmen grew frustrated with the quixotic tabulation of the rents especially in

[27] Everly, 48; Joseph P. Reidy, "Coming From the Shadow of the Past: The Transition from Slavery to Freedom at Freedmen's Village, 1863-1900," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no.4 (October 1987), 112.

[28] Everly, Freedmen's Bureau, 47.

light of sporadic pay periods. Families of military laborers and soldiers usually fell behind or routinely had an inability to pay because of irregular payments made to those from whom they depended. Superintendents were capricious and often times malevolent when they demanded rent in advance, rending many inhabitants unable to pay. Despite nearing open riot, department officials were determined to extoll Yankee virtue in timely payment. Rent collection became a feature of Yankee assimilation into village life and an appendage of freedom.[29]

All labor activities fit within the village's grand plan reaching self-sufficiency. Due to the limited skill development, residents would eventually seek employment and housing elsewhere in the capital area, thus making room for new arrivals. Many residents moved on, but in some instances, residents were reluctant to leave the village because of dependency and the bonds they had forged during their years under government supervision.[30]

Villagers had no qualms with the overall lesson of self-sufficiency that federal official were attempting to demonstrate. As a matter of fact, many freedmen saw the official's attempts to bolster that which they had learned in bondage – self responsibility and initiative. What really troubled them was the method that the village administration took in order to accomplish its goal of full immersion into freedom. Freedmen understood their wartime condition to be temporary and therefore the need for federal support. They felt entitled to all that the government had to offer in such life-changing circumstances. The transition from

[29] Reidy, "Coming From the Shadow of the Past", 113-114.

[30] Ibid., 411.

slavery to freedom was a milestone in their lives that demanded rations for the needy. Some freedmen tied their right to wartime provisions to the sacrifices they made in support of the Union war effort. In an altercation in January 1864 between the mother of a black soldier and the camp superintendent, for instance, the women justified her "right" to support: "I give up my child upon the word and honor of the government to go and tote his musket and he had gone and lost his life. I think Sir that is enough."[31]

With features like crude dwellings, overcrowding combined with subjugation under civilian oversight from many who had been employed by Southern plantations, deductions from ten dollar wages for food, clothing, and shelter thus little or no spending money and the inability to hire themselves out, the freedmen's condition appeared no better than their previous condition. Yet Nichols bragged that this experiment was being carried forth in a beautiful setting, breathing pure air, and drinking pure water "with the cream" while Commandant Ferree remained at Camp Barker with the blind and the lame. He attributed his good fortune to the Almighty who "will make it all right only Abide God's time."

Despite the heavy flow of freedmen into its barracks, Camp Barker continued to flounder. The camp was a death trap where disease and degradation went unchecked. Between June and December, 1863, 490 persons died in the camp. Alexander T. Augusta, a black physician who was trained in Canada, implored camp officials to introduce Potomac water into the camp because the community well dried up in the summer. However, so determined

[31] Reidy, "Coming From the Shadow of the Past," 413.

to alleviate the overcrowding, death, and disease in the District camp, his superiors ignored his request.[32]

The crown jewel of freedom, Camp Barker's location in the Nation's Capital kept it among the top places to seek refuge during the war. The high sentiments of the people, who maintained their preference for Barker over the Arlington huts and a seemingly return to slavery, were demonstrated when the quartermaster charged companies to dismantle the Barker barracks on a bitterly-cold December 21, 1863. As many as 115 people of the 650 inhabitants who lived at Barker were willing to leave the city for the southern shores of the Potomac.

Freedmen's village remained an idealistic placebo in the minds of those who championed its effects among the freedmen. Leadership was too much into promoting and overwhelming themselves through triumvirate showmanship rather than looking at the direct outcomes. Greene's belt notching and Nichol's oversight further developed the village even adding a hospital that was inoperable within six weeks of its opening. Furthermore, the highly touted self-sufficiency and training which freedmen were to gain was rarely realized as the Army employed villagers in jobs such as grading and policing the streets, grave digging and coffin making, and as laborers and laundresses in the hospital. The only industry which employed women and girls was the tailoring shop. From their monthly wages was deducted the cost of clothes and things earlier "purchased," rent for the houses assigned them by the

[32] Everly, Freedmen's Bureau, 48-49.

superintendent. After a work week of six and a half days the laborers could receive a pass for a Saturday afternoon visit to Washington or Sunday church services.

Attempting to construct the self-sustaining Freedmen's Village community, Nichols ran the gauntlet of dislike between whites and blacks. On one side he had illiterate freedmen from Virginia and Maryland who were new to freedom and on the other side were overseers – former slave drivers who found work in the corp. of the Army. Nichols infuriated whites when he pushed to make the Village as workable as possible and drew the ire of freedmen who were vexed at the burdensome rules, intemperance, and the lack of concern for their needs. In many ways, Nichols tenure at the Village ended like that of Camp Barker, alienated and with no rapport with the people.[33]

Considering many of the pressing war concerns at the time, military officials were unconcerned about Nichol's inability to directly mitigate the harshness of the transition from slavery to freedom for the inhabitants of Freedmen's Villager. A replacement in the person of Joseph Brown of the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry was named Greene's new assistant. In May 1864, Greene opened another camp on Mason's Island in the Potomac River to absorb the large number of freedmen who continued to enter the city. Doubling as a training center for the premier regiment of the United States Colored Troops complete with a hospital, industrial training center, and school, the following July saw 1200 freedmen in the camp which summarily became an employment center. Because of the diminishing opportunity within the ranks of the Army labor pool due to the overwhelming numbers that had been placed and an

[33] Ibid., 50-51.

increasing population being overtaken by “malignant fevers of every type”, Greene and Brown contracted freedmen’s labor out to other parts of the country. The officers witnessed contracts and indentures for those sent to New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and even Iowa while others went to Maryland or Virginia. There was little regard for working conditions or keeping families intact. Lessening the ranks of the tired, sick and needy was the sole purpose of the employment effort.

Contrabands preferred to work in jobs where they had the most control over their the conditions of their labor. They were willing allies with the government who believed the contraband should work for their own support in order to prevent an increase of destitution in the city. By committing to “do for themselves”, the contraband compelled the government to find jobs for them in the city rather in thee countryside. In 1864 the army established a new camp on a small island in the Potomac known as Masons Island under the charge of Captain Joseph M. Brown and Danforth B. Nichols. The sole purpose of the camp was to find employment rather than provide relief. As freedmen registered to be employed and District residents solicited for domestic help, the employment rolls became congested and stagnation set in. Brown and Nichols began to look to other states in the North to relieve the unemployment burden. Employers in states such as Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Ohio willingly accepted mostly women and children in positions all northern states.[34]

Nichols found that his reputation preceded him as he moved on to Mason’s Island soon after it was established. The frustrated superintendent once again found that his mission to

[34] Chilton, “City of Refuge”, 198.

the freedmen would be a fraught with pitfalls ending in his resignation from the freedmen's "department on January 31, 1865. Voicing his disdain for the "slanderous reports put in circulation in the wicked city a Washington," he further complained to the American Missionary Association:

> Professor Whipple If you could have been here and seen the feeling when I decided to leave you would have been satisfied that these people did not believe that I had been to them other than a friend- But all things will work together for good to those who loved God who are called according to his purpose – It goes with me to think that the wicked and designing men have so far succeeded in making their impression as almost to succeed in deceiving the very elect but this only proved that prophecy is being fulfilled even at this day.

Nichols accepted a clerkship in the Washington's office of the Third Auditor. However, he took no active part in freedmen's affairs for two years.[36]

The administration of Duff's Green, Camp Barker, Freedmen's Village, and Mason's Island symbolized the growing AMA influence in the Capital city. However, neither the Federal Government nor AMA could predict how popular the quest for freedom would be and thus the tremendous negligence in providing for contraband, fugitives, and freedpeople. A great opportunity was lost on poor staffing, material inadequacy, and insufficient relief which left those who found their way into the camps, at times, worse off than when they entered.

Maintaining the vision of attaining "greatness", Danforth B. Nichols struggled to make sense of the circumstances before him. He witnessed suffering that occurred at Camp Barker

[36] Ibid., 53.

and overlooked its vestiges as the Superintendent of Freedmen's Village and Mason's Island. Nichols fell out of favor with those who he sought to serve, the very ones upon which he would achieve greatness. As the war churned on, the livelihood of the freedmen would be determined by how they avoided caustic relationships as they had experienced. In order for them to define the true meaning of their emancipation proclamation, they had to gather great fortitude against the barriers which they faced.

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The establishment of Freedmen's Village symbolized the growth of the AMA's influence in the District. There was great concern that even the federal government was not prepared to meet the needs of freedmen. In some cases, missionaries witnessed abuse of freedmen while under the care of government officials. The circumstances pressed the association into adhering to standards and qualifications for those who wanted to serve in the District of Columbia mission field. Its standards and qualifications shaped the group profile of the teachers, missionaries, and superintendents. Based on the organization's needs and considering that its financial support would be sought from the middle class Protestant populace in the North, the personal characteristics of teachers in terms of sex, age, education, religious affiliation, and economic status reflected that of New England towns. The selection process provides an understanding of the cadre who journeyed south to lend their expertise as

an AMA worker.

The AMA headquarters in New York handled applications on a state by state basis. Applicants sent completed forms to state representatives who sifted through the pool to determine a candidate's worthiness. For example, the New England branch, based in Massachusetts, chose candidates from all over the state and encouraged them to arrange an interview with its teachers' committee at the main Boston office. Letters of recommendation, preferably from ministers and public school officials completed the formal application requirements.

In order to be selected, certain qualifications that needed to be met. The AMA went to great effort to publicize the personal qualities deemed necessary for freedmen's work. The June 1864 issue the *American Missionary* published an ideal letter submitted by an ideal candidate. The standard application form had questions concerning the person's teaching experience, health, reasons for wanting to go south, and denominational affiliation. The AMA wanted experienced teachers with missionary spirit, a lack of romantic or mercenary motives, good physical health, culture, common sense, and benevolence. The perfect applicant possessed hope, courage, energy, high moral character experience, good judgment, temperance, good education, discipline, and deep interest in the cause of the former slaves. Applicants submitted testimonials from clergymen, friends, relatives, and school administrators. Ultimately, the selection committee had what it believed to be sound information on which to base their decisions.

In accordance with nineteenth century social custom, men were placed in leadership positions as superintendents and missionaries while women were relegated to the teaching profession and minor missionary status. Not only was their ability to work highly regarded, but the financial support from secure families made women from New England and the Midwest most attractive to place on the frontline of urban education in the South, because there was less of a financial burden placed on the association.

Although appointing applicants who were too young was frowned upon by superintendents, older applicants were also discouraged from applying. Given the hot, exhausting, and potentially violent southern climate, the AMA administration sought to optimize the missionary zeal in the mission field and conduct the organization's business in an unencumbered manner. Chronic health issues such as fatigue, exhaustion, and succumbing to the diseases that were running rampant in the southern theater meant an interruption in the program of assisting the freedmen. Reassignments were the protocol for those who became sick and a request to send new applicants into the mission field to fill the ailing teacher's position was the norm.[37]

Top candidates who were considered by the AMA possessed an educational or professional certificate as well as a church membership. It was understood that teachers were to be college and normal school graduates in order to conduct freedmen's work. To be sure, sometimes candidates presented an outstanding education background without experience or an exceptional teaching record minus formal training. In addition to a teacher certification,

[37]W.S. Tilden to Samuel Hunt, January 31, 1866 (16724), AMAA.

successful AMA applicants needed letters of recommendation from pastors of Congregational churches, especially since the home church would be the funding source that would sponsor the potential applicant. The attraction for the church was that the AMA commonly advertised that it would include religious instruction in its mission work to the free people[38]

Before the advent of free transportation provided by the Freedmen Bureau, the AMA considered whether transportation costs would be paid before deciding to accept a candidate. The AMA valued teachers who were financially supported by patrons such as church congregations, Sunday schools, private businesses, and families, as well as individuals who would pay full cost. Such an outlay for expenses helped the Association defray the annual three to five hundred dollar cost incurred in southern teaching. During the 1868-1869 school year, the administration announced that persons interested in southern missions needed to find an outside sponsor who would pay at least some of their expenses.[39]

Candidates who paid their own way were welcomed into the fold. Those who had benefactors and financially supported themselves had a distinct advantage over others. They would be relied upon to purchase their own instructional material and use their financial means for local financial obligations such as food and clothing for the freed people.[40]

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[38]W.S. Tilden to Samuel Hunt, May 17, 1865 (16344), AMAA.

[39]Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 37.

[40] Laurie Stebbins waivered between enterprise and living off of AMA wages. Under her mantra of "God leads her," Stebbins purchased a 226 acre farm in Northumberland County, Virginia to educate freedmen and provide

Candidates seeking riches in work among the freedmen were sorely disappointed. The sponsorship system in general and the organization's salary levels made subsistence the only viable option for compensation for freedman's work. Applicants who were parents carefully weighed the options of traveling south and subsisting on fifteen dollars a month, the standard rate of compensation. This put experienced teachers from large New England towns in a quandary over salary cuts. Superintendent and missionaries who earned considerably more -- from five hundred to eight hundred dollars for nine months – still had trouble supporting a wife and children on that amount.

Many of the missionaries and teachers assigned to the District of Columbia by the AMA sparred many rounds with headquarters over the lacked of income. Not a month passed without personnel in the capital city complaining to headquarters regarding the slowness of pay, reimbursement for expenses such as rent, borrowed funds, and accommodations that snuggly fit within the AMA allowance - something that seemed to bewilder and fatigue those who were not independently wealthy. These soldiers of the cross tried in vain to remedy their circumstances by entering into schemes that provided temporary relief.

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land to blacks. In requesting her monthly salary, she reveals that the AMA money would go towards meeting the "installments as soon as possible ....then divide it off into sections and sell it off to colored people waiting upon them for their payments or allowing them to pay for it in their labor as the case may be." See Laurie W. Stebbins to William Whiting, June 20, 1867 (17350), AMAA; Laurie W. Stebbins to Samuel Hunt, February 14, 1866 (16773), AMAA; Laurie W. Stebbins to George Whipple, May 16, 1867 (17317), AMAA; Laurie W. Stebbins to Samuel Hunt , September 28, 1866 (17045), AMAA; Laurie W. Stebbins to George W. Whipple, December 3, 1869 (17913), AMAA.

Purchasing real estate and boarding together was the most prevalent means of fending off market forces in the city. However, those who accepted mutual living conditions found they had to sacrifice a great deal of their personal comfort in order to live with colleagues. One superintendent described his accommodations with an AMA couple within his charge as living "among the Philistines." The "Philistines," outsiders, crowed the house to the point where the comfort of those who already lived in the residence was encroached upon. "We have no place to stay in an evening or afternoon," wrote the superintendent, "except in our rooms which are suffocating such weather as we have had. The best chamber in the house is occupied by a niece of Mr. and Mrs. M. and her husband; that of course fills that room although one of the largest in the house Mr. and Mrs. M. sleep in the dining room having the refrigerator for what comes upon the table in the same room." The combined use of the dining room as a work room meant there was no place to talk with friends except in the bedrooms. "If this old gentleman could be persuaded," the superintendent lamented, "to take a room upstairs himself for a bedroom and use the parlor and dining room for their legitimate purposes, it would be much more to our comfort and then general appearance of wholesomeness."[41]

Some workers incurred charges of extravagant spending and requested groceries from New York City. They asked for a reprieve from high costs incurred in performing their duties. Other missionaries and teachers resorted to keeping copious and itemized notes of renovations and repairs to buildings, expenses, groceries, boarding, house, freight, salary, bills, storage fees, furniture acquisition, acquisition of property, contributions to mission churches, clothing,

[41] W. L. Coan to George Whipple, September 9, 1864 (16081), AMAA.

travel, and purchase of coal. Even Frederick Douglass wrote to the George Whipple about rents in the city. [42]

Some within the employment of the AMA in Washington perfected the art of begging. Letter after letter discussed what they felt was due them. Some wrote as if performing soliloquies about the merit of their service and the AMA induced debt they found themselves in while others wrote long diatribes explaining how it was impossible to live on what the

[42] Field missionaries had to endure numerous impediments to conducting their missions including high costs of living, price fluctuations, exorbitant real estate pricing, renovation costs, a multiple of expenses, and even accusations of extravagance from headquarters. See W. L. Coan to George Whipple, October 7, 1864 (16119), AMAA; W. L. Coan to George Whipple, October 10, 1864 (16124), AMAA; W. L. Coan to George Whipple, September 16, 1864 (16086), AMAA; W. L. Coan to George Whipple, December 23, 1864 (16196), AMAA; W. L. Coan to William Whiting, January 11, 1865 (16211), AMAA ; W. L. Coan to George Whipple, September 17, 1864 (16088), AMAA; W. L. Coan to AMA, April 25, 1865 (16313), AMAA ; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, May 31, 1865 (16360), AMAA; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, May 31, 1865 (16361), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to AMA, May 15, 1865 (16362), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to William E. Whiting, June 3, 1865 (16371), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, June 4, 1865 (16373), AMAA; W. L. Coan to George Whipple, November 6, 1864 (16157), AMAA; Julia M. Case to George Whipple, June 19, 1865 (16381), AMAA; William J. Wilson to Michael E. Strieby, July 22, 1865(16428), AMAA; William J. Wilson to Michael E. Strieby, July 22, 1865 (16429), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to William E. Whiting, July 29, 1865 (16432), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to William E. Whiting, March 28, 1865 (16281),AMAA; I. Cross to William E. Whiting, August 7, 1865 (16437), AMAA; I. Cross to George Whipple, August 5, 1865 (16439), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to M.E. Strieby, August 11, 1865 (16441), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, August 15, 1865 (16446), AMAA; William J. Wilson to William Whiting, November 10, 1865 (16543), AMAA; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, November 17, 1865 (16548), AMAA; Martha Smith to E.P. Smith, July 24, 1868 (17601), AMAA; J.A. Nichols to William E. Whiting , January 20, 1866 (16714), AMAA; J.A. Nichols to William E. Whiting, December 27, 1865 (16714), AMAA; Tilden to William E. Whiting, March 30, 1865 (16856), AMAA; W.L. Coan to George Whipple, December 31, 1864 (16181), AMAA; W. L. Coan to George Whipple, January 2, 1865 (16202), AMAA; W. L. Coan to George Whipple, January 31, 1865 (16233), AMAA; W. L. Coan to George Whipple, March 1, 1865 (16248), AMAA; W. L. Coan to George Whipple, March 31, 1865 (16285), AMAA; W. L. Coan to George Whipple, April 31, 1865 (16318), AMAA; Page McClelland to George Whipple, July 6′ 1864 (16415), AMAA; W. S. Tilden to William E. Whiting, December 27, 1865 (16630), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to William E. Whiting, December 31, 1865 (16647), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to William E. Whiting, January 3, 1865 (16660), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to William E. Whiting, February 28, 1866 (16790), AMAA; Charles P. Douglass to George Whipple, January 22, 1869 (17726), AMAA; George Marden to Edward P. Smith, June 11, 1869 (17830), AMAA; John Cole to William E. Whiting, August 24, 1869 (17857), AMAA; John Cole to E.P. Smith, October 10, 1870 (18105), AMAA; John Cole to E.P. Smith, October 19, 1870 (18107), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to William E. Whiting, April 30, 1866 (16903), AMAA; W. S. Tilden to Samuel Hunt, January 8, 1866 (16670), AMAA; W. S. Tilden to W.E. Whiting, June 2, 1865 (16364), AMAA.

association prescribed.[43]

William J. Wilson and his wife, Mary, loved their work among the freedmen. Yet

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[43]One skill that AMA workers had to perfect was the art of begging the AMA administration to be paid for their services. See George Needham to George Whipple, October 12, 1864 (16127),AMAA; George Needham to George Whipple, January 18, 1865 (16214), AMAA; Isaac Cross to George Whipple, October 22, 1864 (16138), AMAA; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, October 24, 1864 (16139), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, October 6, 1864 (16116), AMAA; W.S. Coan to Mrs. Wodine, October 17, 1854 (16136), AMAA; W.S. Coan to George Whipple, October 24, 1864 (16140), AMAA; W.S. Coan to George Whipple, November 16, 1864 (16167), AMAA; William J. Wilson to W. E. Whiting, November 17, 1964 (16169), AMAA; L.D. Johnson to George Whipple, November 18, 1864 (16171), AMAA; George E. Baker to Simeon S. Jocelyn, January 15, 1865 (16215), AMAA; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, January 22, 1865 (16220), AMAA; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, January 23, 1865 (16222), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, April 8, 1865 (16295), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to W.E. Whiting, May 3, 1865 (16326), AMAA; Julia M. Case to George Whipple, June 19, 1865 (16381), AMAA; Laurie C. Gates to George Whipple, June 12, 1865 (16383), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, June 16, 1865 (16389), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, June 21, 1865 (16396), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, June 22, 1865 (16397), AMAA; William J. Wilson to W.E. Whiting, June 30, 1865 (16405), AMAA; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, July 10, 1865 (16418), AMAA; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, July 19′ 1865 (16424), AMAA; J.B. Johnson to George Whipple, October 15, 1865 (16501), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, October 16, 1865 (16503), AMAA; William J. Wilson to W.E. Whiting, November 8, 1865 (16539), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to W.E. Whiting, December 15, 1865 (16610), AMAA; J.M. Niemann to George Whipple, March 7, 1866 (16825), AMAA; Sarah A. Vinton to W.E. Whiting, June 27, 1866 (16959), AMAA; James Brand to W.E. Whiting, December 11, 1866 (17125), AMAA; James Brand to W.E. Whiting, December 16, 1866 (17128), AMAA; Isaac Cross to George Whipple, March 28, 1867 (17240), AMAA; George Marden to W.E. Whiting, February 25, 1869 (17753), AMAA; John A. Cole to E.P. Smith, March 1, 1869 (17760), AMAA; Ella and John Cole to W.E. Whiting, March 10 1869 (17766), AMAA; Ella A. Cole to E.P. Smith, October 12, 1869 (17881), AMAA; George Marden to W.E. Whiting, November 1, 1869 (17894)AMAA; S.E. Cargill to W.E. Whiting, January 25, 1879 (18420), AMAA.

their question for the AMA was "how can we get along with our present wages"? Wilson received $50.00 per month and his wife Mary $20.00, but even with the combined income, Wilson confessed, they would have to give up such luxuries as newspapers, periodicals, and books. He reminded the AMA that "this is Washington" and questioned whether a loan could be extended to prevent them from falling behind. "We have done all in our power to avoid so unpleasant a situation that things continue to go on here as they do we shall not we fear be able to hold much longer." Wilson was even clearer in succeeding letters that what "other teachers receive here is of course well-known," and that the bottom line to ending his family's subsistence was "an increase of WAGES". When it seemed as though the AMA administration would not budge, Wilson apprised friends for competing organizations around the city and asked them to write on his behalf and reiterate the desperate need for an increase in salary.[44]

The personal characteristics of the missionaries reflected the constituencies and needs of their sponsoring societies and reflected the trend among Freedmen's Aid Societies during this period. For the most part, these were young women and men drawn from the ranks of the farming and professional classes in New England and Midwest. Although many of the

[44] William J. Wilson was tenacious in his attempt to be paid more which lead to his working at the Freedmen's Savings Bank and eventual professorship at Howard University. See Everly, "Freedmen's Bureau," 63; William J. Wilson to Whipple, August 7, 1864; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, November 28, 1864 (16178), AMAA. Wilson later added his daughter to the teaching staff of the Third Street Church and the triad became the new raison d'etre for an "increase of wages". See Wilson to W.E. Whiting, November 8, 1865 (16539), AMAA. George Needham to George Whipple, October 12, 1864 (16127), AMAA; William J. Wilson to W. E. Whiting, November 17, 1964 (16169), AMAA; George E. Baker to Simeon S. Jocelyn, January 15, 1865 (16215), AMAA; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, January 22, 1865 (16220), AMAA; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, January 23, 1865 (16222),AMAA; William J. Wilson to W.E. Whiting, June 30, 1865 (16405), AMAA; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, July 10, 1865 (16418), AMAA; William J. Wilson to George Whipple, July 19′ 1865 (16424), AMAA; William J. Wilson to W.E. Whiting, November 8, 1865 (16539), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to Samuel Hunt, January 8, 1866 (16670), AMAA.

missionaries did reach a level of notoriety, for the most part, District of Columbia freedmen's teachers did not become famous after their contributions to their new calling, and so biographical information for most is incomplete. Still, the Federal Census for the years 1860 and 1870, biographies published in society journals, and teachers' letters of application yield enough data to provide a starting point for a series of questions: who were they and why did they venture to Washington, D.C.?[45]

[45] The roll of teachers and the locations of their missions can be gathered from a series of monthly reports. See W.S. Tilden to Samuel Hunt, January 1866, (16725 – 16734), AMAA for Giesboro, Page F. McClellan, Mary E. McNabb; Miss W.L. Harris; Jeremiah M. Mace, Roving Missionary; William L. Coan, Roving Missionary; Camp Barker, initially Danforth B. Nichols, William L. Coan, William J. Wilson, and Mary A. Wilson; Campbell Hospital (Government Building), Corner of 7th and Boundary Streets – J.B. Johnson, Miss Ann Frances Carter, and L.D. Johnson (No. 4), Charlotte "Lottie" Hills (No. 1) , Miss Sarah W. Stebbins, Olive M. Tilden (No. 3), Sarah A. Vinton, Julia A. Case, Ms. Elizabeth H. Disbrow (No. 2); Third Street (Baptist) Church (3rd Street School – 3rd Street near 2nd Street between H and I) – William J. Wilson, Mary A. Wilson, wife, Annie M. Wilson, daughter, and Julia B. Landre (How obtained – through an arrangement with Association; accommodations later provided by 2nd Baptist Church); Pisgah Chapel or Green's Chapel (Obtained through missionary family, Corner of 2nd or L and 11th Streets) Miss Julia M. Case – Assisting Ms. Vinton and teaching a Green's Chapel (Pisgah Chapel); Judiciary Square (Portable Government Building, Corner of 5th and E Streets) – Kate B. Harvey; Soldiers Library, Miss S.A. Vinton and Miss L. W. Stebbins, later Mrs. Nichols, assistant. Also See George Marden to W.E. Whiting, November 1, 1869 (17894), AMAA for Capital Hill School (Corn Hill), – Miss C. Ganger (No. 1 – East Capitol Street), Kate B. Harvey (No. 3 – Capital Hill), Emina A. Roberts (No.2 – Capitol Hill); Primary school at Judiciary Square, Anna C. Park (Capital Hill); Banger School at Judiciary Square, Miss M.S. Boutell, Miss A.W. Lamson (Assist); Wisewell Barracks School, Corner of 7th and P Street, Hattie H. Russell (No. 3 – Broadway Branch), Laura Stebbins (No. 1 – Broadway Branch), Mrs. E.H. Disbrow (No. 2), S.T. Goodell (No. 4); Missionaries who arrived later, as activities began to decline, were from local origins as well as the South. Consider the administration of Lincoln Industrial Mission, an AMA sponsored school: Rev. George N. Marden (Brockport Maine) and Department Internal Revenue, Warren Brown Pain (high school) Washington, DC, Alexander Steward (Augusta, Georgia), Thomas C. Miller (Charleston, South Carolina), T. E. Miller (Charleston, South Carolina), H.M. Brown - Howard University (Washington City), S.J.R. Nelson - Howard University (Washington City), J.E. Bleuheim (Alexandria, Virginia), Daniel Morris (Kilmarnack, Lancaster Co., Virginia), Chas. J. Malord (Bear Hollow, Virginia), R. K. Morris - Howard University (Washington, City DC), P.F. Morris - Howard University (Washington City, DC), George Copeland (Alexandria, Virginia), James E. Hunt (Annapolis, Maryland), Wm. H. Boles (Leesburg, Virginia), ? P. Smith (Columbia, South Carolina), Chas. A Harris (Bladensburg, Maryland), F.J. Shadd (Washington City), Isaiah (Washington City), D.A. ?Sadjwarxx? (Wilmington, North Carolina).

There were several characteristics of the "typical" teacher in Washington, D.C. She was white, in her late twenties when she first applied for a commission, a member of a Congregational Church, well educated, single, and inexperienced as a common-school teacher. She came from a small town or rural "Yankee" home. Her father, a native New Englander, was likely to be a clergyman, farmer, or skilled tradesmen. About three-fifths all the teachers came from New England, almost a third from Massachusetts alone. More than 80% had been born in New England, although half of that number resided in the Midwest. Most volunteers began their freedmen's teaching between 1865 in 1868.

The economic challenges teachers faced did not diminish the desire to work among the freedmen in the urban South. Missionaries and teachers traveled from near and far in order to be counted among those who helped in the transition from slavery to freedom. Those that arrived resembled the New England teachers in the North. Their similarities were striking in terms of their sex (mostly women, age (more than half were in their twenties), and level of education (nearly all for whom information is available had attended normal school). A large percentage of the teachers were Congregationalist, which, of course, was the AMA preference. Most of the teachers came from the New England and Midwest Protestant middle class, the group primarily responsible for the creation and support of the evangelical abolitionist movement in the antebellum period.

The Pennsylvania native Laurie Gates felt that the Lord called her to this duty and was deeply influenced by the lectures of Anna E. Dickinson. Described as "good looking – with high countenance sanctified by the sweet influence of grace" by Lorenzo D. Johnson, Chief Surgeon

at Lincoln Hospital, Gates was twenty-eight when she came to Washington to visit her sister and brother in law, a military assistant where Johnson worked. Persuaded to remain in the capital to open a school at the hospital, she claimed she "beheld a broad field of labor spread out before me, for which a voice seemed to whisper to me 'The Harvest is truly great, but the labors are few.'"[46]

Laura S. Haviland (1808-1898) was another teacher who enlisted in the corps of the association in the nation's capital. Born to a Quaker family in Canada, she was brought up in New York State but moved to Raisin, Lenawee County, Michigan, following her marriage at sixteen. Haviland later joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church and was active in education and social justice issues throughout her life. Using Oberlin College as model, she and her husband founded the Raisin Institute in 1837 as an academy open to "all of good moral character" regardless of race. Never one to tire of assisting those in bondage, she became increasingly involved with the underground railroad after her husband's death, traveling frequently to the South and participating in elaborate plans to help slaves escape.[47]

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[46] Gates ran through the gamut of emotions in teaching the freedmen. There were times when she was full of Christian cheer while other moments she appeared to be run down and feeble. Poor health eventually got the best of her and she left the services of the AMA. See Laurie C. Gates to AMA, July 1, 1864 (16031), AMAA; L.D. Johnson (Lincoln General Hospital) to Whipple, Jocelyn, Tappan, June 1, 1864 (16019), AMAA; L.D. Johnson to Simeon Jocelyn, June 15, 1864 (16025), AMAA; W. L. Coan to George Whipple , September 1, 1864 (16073), AMAA; Laurie C. Gates to George Whipple, December 31, 1864 (16201), AMAA; L. D. Johnson to Simeon Jocelyn, July 9, 1864 (16035), AMAA; L.D. Johnson to Whipple, November 20, 1865 (16564), AMAA; W.L. Coan to George Whipple, October 10, 1864 (16124), AMAA; W.L. Coan to George Whipple, November 12, 1864 (16164), AMAA; Laurie C. Gates to George Whipple, December 8, 1864 (16191), AMAA; Everly, "Freedmen Bureau", 63-64;

[47] Laura S. Haviland , *A Women Life-Work: Labors and Experiences of Laura S. Haviland* (Cinncinnati: Walden and Stowe, 1882), 455-476; Also see, Laura S. Haviland to Levi Coffin, April 11, 1868 (17542), AMAA; Laura S. Haviland

When the Civil War broke out, she organized relief efforts for wounded or imprisoned soldiers as well as for former slaves, refugees, and those who were illegally still held in bondage, working with the Freedmen's Relief Association and the American Missionary Association, with which she established an orphanage primarily devoted to black children. She described the condition of the freedmen as she passed though Washington, D.C. on her way to South Carolina: "I found an abundance to do here as there were some 4000 freedmen in that city who could not work, there was great distress here, and must be during cold weather, as Govt. would furnish a room and rations, I concluded to remain though cold weather." Certain of her ability to lend a helping hand in the service of the freedmen based on six years of experience and two years with the Michigan Wesleyan Conference, Haviland successfully solicited the AMA for a commission and settled into a rooming house whose landlord, she noted, was very concerned about the care of the "niggers".[48]

Although she lectured, lobbied, and ministered, Haviland's expertise was grassroots activism against the injustices she encountered. Her book, *A Women's Life Work* is filled with stories of black-white relationships under slavery and includes a slave narrative from a man referenced as "Uncle Phillip," who transcribed his story in his own words. It is, above all, a

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to George Whipple Levi Coffin, April 13, 1868 (17544), AMAA; Laura S. Haviland to George Whipple, May 16, 1868 (17563), AMAA; Laura S. Haviland to George Whipple, May 25, 1868 (17565), AMAA; Laura S. Haviland to George Whipple, May 8, 1868 (17566), AMAA; Laura S. Haviland to George Whipple, May 29, 1868 (17567), AMAA; Laura S. Haviland to George Whipple, June 4, 1868 (17570), AMAA; Laura S. Haviland to George Whipple, June 5, 1868 (17571), AMAA; Laura S. Haviland to George Whipple, June 10, 1868 (17576), AMAA; Laura S. Haviland to George Whipple, June 27, 1868 (17586), AMAA; Laura S. Haviland to George Whipple, June 29' 1868 (17588), AMAA; Laura S. Haviland to George Whipple, July 13, 1868 (17595), AMAA.

[48]Laura S. Haviland to Levi Coffin, April 11, 1868 (17542), AMAA.

religious autobiography chronicling his conversion experience and her desire to express faith through benevolent social action. [49]

Haviland did not shy away from the realities of slavery. She described graphically the punishments handed out to slaves and gave readers eyewitness accounts of war-time prisons, hospitals, soup kitchens and refugee camps. She was deeply interested in the subtle relationships between the Society of Friends and evangelical Christianity. Haviland remained a Wesleyan Methodist for the most active period of her life, but she returned to her Quaker roots shortly before her death.[50]

There were numerous referrals and introductions of potential members of this missionary fold in the service of the freedmen in the District of Columbia. Family members, co-teachers, and subscribers of the monthly American Missionary magazine, provided a wellspring of candidates to choose. J. G. D. Pettyjohn recommended his brother, Rev. Leon Pettyjohn, after he had served as a missionary in Nashville, Tennessee and returned home to care for his son who died from injuries sustained while fighting with the Union Army. The brother, a longtime resident of the Bethel community in Clement County, Ohio, sought to reenter the service of the Association and be near his remaining son, Dr. Brookes Pettyjohn, sargent on the contraband farms near Arlington Heights, Virginia. Pettyjohn, an employee of the Treasury Department during Lincoln's Administration, offered to pay for buildings that would be used in

[49] Haviland , *A Women Life-Work,* 455-476.

[50] Ibid.

the "Good Work of educating and devoting the Colored Man." His brother would be the right man to teach, preach, or use as the duty may require. There were "few if any who would excel him. His absolutism is so old that it has become a second nature to him, and if he was not my brother I would say as a seasoned and an impressive preacher few excel him."

In a letter that accompanied Pettyjohn's letter, L. W. Chaffin stated that he had been intimately acquainted with Rev. Leon Pettyjohn for many years. They had worked in the anti-slavery movement together. He was the right man for the intellectual and mind elevation of "freedmen." "He is an intellectual man and not only adapted to the work of a teacher of letters etc., but is well qualified to impart religious education instruction. He is an experienced and able minister of the Gospel of Christ. If you wish any missionary services performed he is the man for the work."[51]

The brother did offer more incentives to adding his brother to the Washington field of the society. The brother's placement would make six Pettyjohn's who were employed and connected with the contraband work in and around Washington, Pettyjohn offered to materially aid his brother's finances if the association employed him. "If you can do so and can only offer to pay him the same as before ($50 per mo) I shall try to use an outside influence here to give him some additional compensation. And as he is and always has been a poor man, and has given his time for the past twenty-five years to this work besides expending all his

[51]J.W. Chaffin to George Whipple, September 7, 1864 (16080), AMAA.

means (he once owned a good farm in Ohio) it is proper and just he should now have if possible better pay." [52]

Superintendents took pride in recommending their best teachers to work among the freedmen. Considering the skill levels and earnestness of the candidate, the school heads were forthright with a description of those for whom letters were sent. Ms. E. W. Robinson did not hesitate to outline the qualifications of Miss L.H. Henley as a teacher of freedmen. An assistant in Robinson's evening school for adult freedmen for four months, Henley was given the most advanced classes. She became known for her tact, toughness, and efficient management of the class. Even her conversations demonstrated a willingness to teach the colored race. During mile-long walks to and from the school, Henley often expressed interest in the freed people, her love of children, and the pleasure in teaching them. She would periodically recap her observations from numerous schools for blacks she had visited.

Henley's spirit, aims, sympathies, readiness for self-denial, and literary qualifications were qualities necessary for missionary educational work. From evening, day, and Sabbath schools to her missionary work among soldiers and freedmen, she readily adapted her pedagogy to fit the delivery of instruction needed, often displaying a self-sacrificing spirit. Robinson had high praise for Henley. Judging from her standard and style of teaching, "I am able to say without hesitation, that I very seldom meet a young lady so well qualified in all respects... I hold that the best teachers are needed in schools for the freedmen, and I consider Miss H among the number."

[52] J.G.D. Pettyjohn to George Whipple, September 6, 1864 (16079), AMAA.

Robinson was even more effusive in her remarks about Mary E. Russell, a co-worker and former member of her church in Bethany, Connecticut. Russell was a very successful teacher who had been teaching for five years. Twenty-four years of age and a graduate of the State Normal School, she had a fondness for children and proved herself well suited in tact, government, general management, facility of communication and instruction, for all but the highest grade of schools. A veteran teacher who taught in her home town and received accolades from the supervising committee in Meridian, Ohio, Russell was noted for her ability to be a single classroom teacher of school-age children and for her unusual compassion and power.[53]

Other potential missionary teachers were at the center of efforts to commission competent black teachers, whom some within the American Missionary Association leadership said were hard to find. Julia B. Landre, a Boston, Massachusetts transplant, garnered the enthusiastic support of William J. Wilson, principal of the Camp Barker School. Wilson thought Landre was a young, pious, and devoted "Colored Lady"; who was well qualified for an assistant teacher appointment within the association. He was not shy about encouraging others to submit letters of recommendation on her behalf. Wilson championed the fitness of the daughter of a widow who had taught music in his school for three months and he thought "indispensible."[54]

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[53] E.W. Robinson to Samuel Hunt, August 11, 1865 (16443), AMAA.

[54]William J. Wilson to George Whipple, March 1, 1865 (16250), AMAA.

Rev. Henry Highland Garnet's knowledge of Landre dated to July 8, 1864, when he accepted a letter transferring her membership to the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church from Zion Methodist Church of Boston. Garnet bolstered Wilson's comments to Whipple, recommending the appointment of Landre: "I do not hesitate to say that I think the appointment a wise one. Miss Landre is a member of my church, well suited for the work, and an industrious Christian. It will afford me great pleasure if your purpose shall be consummated."[55]

In the spring of 1865, Landre realized her goal as she outlined the parameters for accepting her commission at the request of Whipple and committed to the education of the freedmen. "I cannot board for less than $20 per month," wrote Landre. "Therefore I should like to have $20 for board and $10 for teaching, making a salary of $30 per month." She expressed her sincere "thanks to the American Missionary Association for the commission giving me the situation as teacher in Mr. Wilson's school. I shall endeavor by God's help to discharge my duties faithfully, and do all I can to promote their intellectual, moral, and religious instruction."[56]

Missionaries were crucial to the work of the AMA. Few things were done without a missionary's involvement. Missionaries were the eyes and ears of the organization's work in the vineyard and provided the influence that the AMA needed as well as contacts to its constituency. The AMA records are filled with stories of missionaries detailing the plight of the

[55] Henry Highland Garnet to George Whipple, February 28, 1865 (16245), AMAA.

[56] Julia B. Landre to George Whipple, May 4, 1865 (16328), AMAA.

freedmen along with their own sufferings, hopes, and fears. Teachers were urged, or compelled, to write articles about their work. Jocelyn instructed a Virginia teacher to write for the journal, something spicy and good. On another occasion Whipple asked a Georgia agent to send some notable instances of progress and learning, cases of terrible suffering, hopeful conversions to Christ, deeds of hatred and violence on the part of the whites toward blacks. Such individual instances would arrest the attention more strongly general statements, however correct.[57]

[57] Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction*, 94. In many instances, missionaries were asked to write glowingly of their work for publication in the *American Missionary*. Yet their true feelings were often expressed in routine correspondence. An example of this can be found in two letters from Superintendent W.S. Tilden about the erratic disposition of John Kimball. See W.S. Tilden to Editor of the American Missionary, October 12, 1865 (16493), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, January, 31, 1866 (16720), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, February 3, 1866 (16744), AMAA. Standard monthly reports were also completed to inform the AMA of the population it was teaching. Questions on the form include: Identification of which report; Month of the Report; Location of the School; When was the school established; teacher's or teachers' name; Number of days kept; Number of sessions; Number of different pupils; Largest number present at any session; Average attendance of the month; Whole number of males; Whole number of females; No. over 16 years of age; No. under 6 years of age; Number of pupils who read and spell; Number who study mental arithmetic; Number who pursue written arithmetic; Number who study geography; Number who write; Is singing taught in school; Number who attend to needlework; Number of whites; Do the mulattoes show any more capacity than blacks?; Do the colored children show equal capacity with the whites (as compared with whites in northern schools); Each teacher will make out a monthly report, sign, and return it to me, 61 John Street, on or before the third of the succeeding month. All the blanks should be filled, giving approximate returns, it exact ones cannot be obtained. For the evening schools the first line may be left blank; State the general progress of the school for the moth, the chief obstacles encountered, any cases of insubordination that have occurred, and the method of disposing of them, with such suggestions as may have a bearing upon the welfare of the school; and any encouragement given to the work, by parsons, or societies, on the ground; When teaching is done for or among the soldiers, please embody the facts in a separate item of the report. See Mrs. William J. Wilson to George Whipple, November 28, 1865, AMAA to Jeremiah M. Mace to George Whipple, December 3, 1865 (16599), AMAA.

Men also worked in the Washington field. Most served as superintendents, principals, or missionaries. They tended to be slightly older than the women (in their thirties). Most were married clergymen who had attended college or seminary. Many of the ministers demonstrated a long-term commitment to missionary service of some type on behalf of their own church or interdenominational evangelizing society. Some came primarily out of devotion to their faith.

In spite of incomplete evidence, suggestions may be offered about the nature of their work. Most did not serve as soldiers during the war, perhaps obtaining exemptions by virtue of their profession (clergymen), youth, or status as college students. However, a commission from the AMA or some other sponsoring agency enabled these men to play in active role in the postwar effort. The small pool of northern ministers supplied most of the men in freedmen's education.

Rev. Jeremiah Moulton Mace, the son of Jonathan and Dorothy (Moulton) Mace, was born July 30, 1804. He studied for the ministry at Charlestown, Massachusetts and Thomaston,

Maine. He married Sarah A. Pitman of Portsmouth, Maine on December. 12, 1833, and had three children. Mace was ordained in Montville, Maine in 1840 and pastored several churches in the greater Massachusetts region from 1840 to 1855. Mace taught in reform school in Boston, Massachusetts and supplied churches for seven years in Carver, Halifax, Pocasset and Hanover, Massachusetts while maintaining a residence in Middleborough, Massachusetts. He and his wife led an itinerant ministry as they settled in Colebrook, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, and Dummerston, Vermont before he was called to Washington, D.C. as a member of the United States Christian Commission to work among the freedmen under the auspices of the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS).[58]

Mace soon grew tired of the Baptist organization and sought a commission with the American Missionary Association. He hinted that his disenchantment stemmed from the ABHMS's laxity in the inspection his work and providing a review or commentary of what he had done. "I have been compelled to do this, that and the other thing, not as my employers desired me to do, but as my judgment might dictate," Mace charged. "No inspection only what is contained in my printed commission had been given me in my almost six months." He was sick and could not endure any longer the "loose way" of conducting missionary business. Mace was willing to labor anywhere, for any people, under God to do the most good just as he had

[58] Nathan Franklin Carter, *The Native Ministry of New Hampshire* (Concord, New Hampshire: Rumford Printing, Company, 1906), 304; Joseph and Lucy Ellen Dow , *History of the Town of Hampton, New Hampshire* (Salem, Massachusetts: The Salem Press Publishing and Printing Company, 1893), 832.

done the previous six months. He believed he paved the way for a good and great work to be done in and around the "wicked city".[59]

One of the many things that attracted the AMA to Mace was his reputation for going anywhere. He visited soldiers on a daily basis at the Baltimore Depot. He talked to crowds of up to 3,000 soldiers and gave them paper and books. He had charge of two black churches in the city and one on Mason's Island. He also visited the guard house in the city where from 200 to 400 prisoners were found, along with the guard house of Georgetown containing hundreds of prisoners. Mace expressed interest in giving up the freedmen's camp on Mason's Island, and taking charge of Camp Barker.[60]

Maces provided a peace offering in the deal to join the AMA in the "wicked city". He offered to help the organization acquire the control of a building for the purpose of teaching. The Second Baptist church, with which he worked as a part of the ABMHS missionary corps, offered to make a deed of their property to any Society he recommended, on condition that the latter appropriate $500 to complete their building. This building, measuring 15x30, had one story and some timber for a floor for the second story. The parishioners were looking to complete a house on the same property that was one story and contained a few walls except there was no roof. They contracted with a builder who needed five hundred dollars to put the rook on the house. Mace encouraged the AMA to purchase the deed from the ABHMS because

[59] Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, August 13, 1864 (16056), AMAA

[60] Ibid.

he believed the property to be worth nearly $3000. George Whipple responded: "I have seen it. The location is very desirable, in 3rd and N Streets nearly in front of Judge Douglas Farmer mansion, now a hospital. I have tried twice to see Mr. Day about it, and will see him again, and try again. Dr. Marks thinks we should take both Mr. Mace, and the property. Mace is certainly a very hard working man."[61]

A few black men followed the lead of William J. Wilson and relocated to the national capital city to pick up the cause of the AMA. Although the AMA had difficulty in attracting male volunteers, the Association kept track of black men from around the country who fit the criteria of a good education, a high moral purpose, and some experience in teaching. The abolitionist circle was where they usually found willing candidates for their cause.

John Sella Martin was one such candidate for the District theatre. He was a prominent minister and lecturer by the time he arrived there. Born a slave in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1832 to a slave woman and her owner's nephew, Martin was sold with his mother to owners in Columbia, Georgia. He remained a slave until his escape on a Mississippi riverboat in December

[61] George Whipple to American Missionary Association, August 10, 1864 (16055), AMAA; After a tumultuous two years as a missionary in Washington, D.C. where he relocated his family to the District of Columbia, inquired about a teaching position for his daughter, and raised the ire of his colleagues over his perceived power, Mace returned to the northern environs of Massachusetts where he pastored churches at Cape Neddick, Maine and Rohoboth, Massachusetts. He retired to spend his last years on his Plymouth farm and died January 9, 1885. See AMA to Jeremiah Mace (Commission), September 1, 1864 (87559), AMAA; George Whipple to Jeremiah Mace (Commission Agreement), September 1, 1864 (87560), AMAA; Mrs. Coleman to American Missionary Association, November 1864 (16180), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, December 5, 1864 (16186), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, March 25, 1865 (16279), AMAA; E.P. Smith to George Whipple, August 25, 1865 (16452), AMAA; John Alvord to George Whipple, September 12, 1865 (16463), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, November 13, 1865 (16552), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, January 3, 1866 (16662), AMAA; Nathan Franklin Carter, *The Native Ministry of New Hampshire* (Concord, New Hampshire: Rumford Printing, Company, 1906); Joseph and Lucy Ellen Dow , *History of the Town of Hampton , New Hampshire* (Salem, Massachusetts: The Salem Press Publishing and Printing Company, 1893).

1855. Arriving in Chicago the following year, Martin began associating with abolitionists and launched his long career of oratory. Martin later moved to Detroit to study for the Baptist ministry and in 1857 was ordained to preach. He received the pastorate at Michigan Street Baptist Church in Buffalo, New York, but moved to Boston, in 1859, to work at the Tremont Temple. Riding the overwhelming approval of the large crowds that gathered to hear him preach, Martin assumed the pastorate of the predominantly white Baptist Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts for eight months before accepting the pulpit of the Joy Street Church, one of the oldest black Baptist churches in Boston. During this same year, Martin published a poem, "The Sentinel of Freedom," in *Anglo-African Magazine*.[62]

In August 1861, Martin embarked on the first of several trips to England to speak on the behalf of Massachusetts Governor John Andrew in support of the Union. He returned to the United States in February 1862. When Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, Martin addressed a famous meeting at Tremont Temple along with Frederick Douglass, who was impressed by his oratorical skills. Later that month, Martin travelled again to Europe to preach in London on behalf of the industrialists, Harper Twelvetrees. In April 1864, having journeyed back from England, he began to preach at Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York.

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[62] RJM Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers: The Lives of Six Nineteenth Century Afro-Americans,* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 198; George Whipple to M.E. Strieby, June 15, 1865 (88814), AMAA; [John] Sella Martin to Michael Strieby, March 29, 1866 (93404), AMAA.

The following April, the AMA sent him to Great Britain as a fund-raiser and as its delegate he delivered an address to the Paris Anti Slavery Conference on August 27, 1867. One year later, Martin accepted the pastorate of the 15th Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC. He attended the formative meeting of the Colored National Labor Union (CNLU) in Washington, D.C. in December 1869, was appointed to its executive board, and was named editor of the CNLU's short-lived official organ The New Era. When the publication foundered shortly afterward, he moved to New Orleans, where he was involved in local politics and earned his living as a lecturer. In 1875, he was a founding member and president of the New Orleans Atheneum Club and a member of the Louisiana Progressive Club. He died in Louisiana in 1876.[63]

Black women were also drawn to the southern metropolitan field. In addition to Landre, who was accepted into the society's ranks to teach with the Wilsons, the AMA employed other black women who had exceptional careers before they arrived in the city. Mary Ann Shadd Cary was one of twenty-five teachers in the majority-black Lincoln Institute administration in 1871. The Carys moved to Washington in 1865 and Mary entered the Law Department of Howard University, earning her degree in 1870. She was the first woman to receive the degree

[63]RJM Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers*, 195; George Whipple to M.E. Strieby, June 15, 1865 (88814), AMAA; [John] Sella Martin to Michael Strieby, March 29, 1866 (93404), AMAA.

from that school and only the second black woman to earn a law degree.[64] Mary Ann Shadd was born in Wilmington, Delaware on October 9, 1823 the eldest daughter of free blacks, Abraham and Harriet Parnell Schadd. The family move to West Chester, Pennsylvania and anglicized the last name to "Shadd" and she attended a Quaker school. After completing her studies in six years, she returned to Wilmington where, at age sixteen, she opened a tuition-based school, the first of several she was to establish during the following decades. When the public school system put her out of business, Shadd moved on and taught in West Chester, New York City, and Norristown, Pennsylvania. As a result of the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, Shadd and her brother Isaac went to Windsor, Canada, where she founded a school for both black and white pupils that was sustained by the American Missionary Association. In 1856, she married Thomas F. Cary of Toronto and resumed teaching in Chatham (1859-1864) under the auspices of the American Missionary Association. She declared that although her commission was for one year, she expected to labor for many years in Canada, "if it be God's will, provided the opposition and misrepresentation even among those who should sympathize with and aid me."[65]

Cary's most noteworthy achievements center on the *Provincial Freeman*, a weekly Canadian newspaper, published with varying regularity between 1853 and 1859.

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[64] See Silverman, Jason H. "Mary Ann Shadd and the Search for Equality." In Leon Litwack and August Meier, eds. *Black Leaders of the Nineteenth Century*. Urbana, Ill., 1988, pp. 87-100. *African-American Culture and History,* 506-507.

[65] See Jason H. Silverman, "Mary Ann Shadd and the Search for Equality," In Leon Litwack and August Meier, eds. *Black Leaders of the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana, Ill., 1988), pp. 87-100; Salzman, ed., *African-American Culture and History*, 506-507; DeBoer, *Be Jubilant My Feet*, 161-162.

Acknowledged as one of the first woman publishers of a newspaper in Canada and the first black newspaperwoman in North America, Cary became embroiled in particularly heated debate – notably with Henry Bibb – over the issue of integration (whether blacks were exiles or new citizens of Canada) and about the activities of Bibb's Refugees Home Society. She charged that the society's land-purchase scheme offered no advantage over the Canadian government's offer and was sometimes more costly.

During the Civil War, Cary returned to the United States to help the Union Army recruit in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. Between 1869 and 1874, she taught public school in Detroit and in Washington, D.C., where she also served as a principal of the Lincoln Institute from 1872-1874. Cary would go on to play an active role in the woman's suffrage movement and addressed the annual convention of the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1878. Cary founded the Colored Women's Progressive Association in Washington, D.C.[66]

To understand the vision that the workers maintained as they disembarked in the city, we must understand the evangelical milieu of the time. It was a moment of millennial preparation that incorporated the ideology of abolitionism, evangelicals, charity workers, common-school reformers, temperance workers, Sunday school organizers, and distributors of

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[66] In addition to her work for the *Provincial Freeman*, Cary was the author of an advisory pamphlet, *Hints to the Colored People of the North* (1849), espousing her ideals of self help; of *A Plea for Emigration*, or *Notes on Canada West, in its Moral, Social, and Political Aspects* (1852), a booklet describing opportunities for blacks in Canada; and (with Osborne Anderson, one of the five survivors of John Brown's raid) of *A Voice from Harper's Ferry* (1873). She Contributed to Frederick Douglass's *New National Era* and John Wesley Cromwell's *Advocate.* See Silverman, Jason H. "Mary Ann Shadd and the Search for Equality," 87-100; Salzman, ed., *African-American Culture and history*, 506-507.

tracts and Bibles in their educational and social welfare programs for southern black people. Firmly believing that slavery deprived slaves of their responsibility for their own spiritual and physical welfare, many of the missionaries believed that the slave had descended to a state of moral degradation in which he had no ability or incentive to take care of himself. To many within the missionary movement, slavery was a form of personal anarchy that stunted personal growth and the slave's character was shaped by the capriciousness of the slaveholder who exercised power in the form of physical violence rather than moral authority.[67]

According to those who had long been in the abolitionist's movement, in order to dissolve the effects of slavery, blacks needed to be liberated from the shackles that bound their body in order for the soul to be truly "free". Each free person, according to those who were on the front line of freedmen missions, possessed the ability to distinguish right from wrong. The role of the teacher was to unearth and encourage this ability by providing an "Education" which ingrained moral as well as intellectual growth. Missionary teachers were to model the characteristics of a truly free person, one who was naturally pious, thrifty, and held a chaste ability to obey his own moral inclinations. They firmly thought the conscience liberated the soul. [68]

Their labor was a natural and benevolent extension of the war. Freedmen's aid societies felt they worked in tandem with politicians and government policymakers who thought Reconstruction was the time to deal with the "Negro problem" on the one hand and defiant

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[67] Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 14-15.

[68] Ronald G. Walters, *The Antislavery Appeal*, 60; Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 14- 15.

rebels on the other. Avoiding contact with southern whites, benevolent enlistees concentrated their efforts on the former slaves. Freedmen's workers maintained that black character reform was at the forefront of their effort. Inspired by the assumption that human nature and the will of God supported their work, defined its purpose, shaped its goals, and fired its proponents with religious zeal, work among the freedmen became a civil "religion," where the faithful were called into interdenominational action.[69]

The foundation for freedmen's aid work was deeply embedded in the theology of the evangelical wing of American Protestantism. Rooted in the inherent sinfulness of each person and the need for spiritual regeneration to repent, antebellum evangelicalism was undergirded by the pillars of doctrinal and social praxis. These included a millenarian faith that all Christians must assume responsibility for the conversion of the heathen in order to prepare for the date when Jesus would return to earth and reign for a thousand years; an increasing emphasis on the importance of "good works"; and a growing fear among many American Protestants that the moral fiber of society was crumbling under the weight of economic change and the emergence of "dangerous classes" - the poor, roman Catholics, immigrants, and free thinkers. As a means of converting those from without, and inspiring those already within their ranks, the evangelicals relied heavily on the religious revival, a worship service during which participants

[69] Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 15, 17.

experienced first an emotional awareness of their own unworthiness and then the tender forgiveness of God.[70]

AMA literature was nationalistic in its outlook. Like most evangelicals, the AMA viewed the American political and economic system as good except for the sin of slavery. Slavery contradicted the principles of republican government. Emancipation would result in purification, rather than repudiation, and would be consistent with the Constitution. The AMA's ultimate objective was to "to realize utopia under the American form of government," and to infuse the state, church, school, and family with a new awareness of God's will. In 1863, Lewis Tappan tried to discourage a young African educated in America who was thinking of returning home, suggesting that the "spirit of caste" would diminish as black men became educated and refined. Tappan added, "caste is the twin brother of slavery, and they died together, in a great degree."[71]

Amid suffering, death, and military stalemate, the AMA mounted an urgent campaign to fasten character reform on the former slaves who would eventually usher the South into a more godly, "orderly" America, united in morality as well as political purpose. However, the epoxy of social welfare was applied with a warning: that if northern evangelicals ignored the kairotic upheaval, then freedmen would become a permanent social menace to society,

[70] Ibid., 18 – 19.

[71] Ibid., 22-23.

fostering violence and social disruption. The AMA outlined the problem in graphic terms: "leave the field for a few years to Romanism, to plant and sow; ---Southern teaching, and preaching; and the case is hopeless. The time for us to work is now." Emancipation must not become a "curse" to blacks and to "our common country." Thus freedmen's workers waged both a defensive and offensive battle against the forces of sin and dissolution.[72]

To combat many of the sins that plagued southern culture, the AMA aggressively proselytized and sponsored revivals, Sunday and Sabbath Schools, Bible-study classes, and conducting impromptu churches. The purpose of religious work was to implant a code of middle-class Protestant morality in blacks. With a combination of self-improvement (i.e., the development of one's conscience to regulate behavior and thought) and the evangelical quest for piety with the Victorian obsession with self control, AMA workers longed for the day when black people would be baptized into true independent citizenry and demonstrate the values of steady work, thrift, honesty, and chastity. [73]

With Romanism, rum, and ignorance looming as the biggest foes of black social reform, members of the freedmen's aid movement closely resembled the New England school reformers of the antebellum period. The scholarship on the origins and purpose of common-school reform offers a convincing argument that Horace Mann and others saw public schooling as a force for social cohesion and American republicanism. Those who threatened northern

[72] Ibid., 24 – 25.

[73] Ibid., 25.

middle class life - the poor, immigrants, Roman Catholics, and wage workers – posed the threat that American society could splinter into numerous competing interests. Common schools absorbed children of all classes and ethnic groups, taught them "universal" values they might or might not be taught at home, and graduated students fully prepared to function as reasonable American citizens. In the words of Carl F. Kaestle, the common school represented a general Yankee "ethos of efficiency, manipulation, and mastery." The freedman's school, funded by both private and federal monies, was an example of national institution building during this period in American history.[74]

The AMA's effectiveness in its southern work was maintained in the manner in which it efficiently collected money, hired and supervised agents, made and implemented policy. The organizational structure of the association's initial constitution provided for the president, five to seven vice presidents, a corresponding secretary (two after 1853), a treasurer, and an executive committee of twelve with corresponding secretaries and treasurer as ex-officio members. The presidents and vice-presidents were honorary administrators, selected with a view to enhancing the AMA's prestige and fund-raising potential. The annual meeting served as the primary governing body constituted of officials and members. It reviewed activities and policies and elected officers. On the other hand, the executive committee, which met monthly in New York, was more influential. An annual meeting decision rarely reversed an executive committee decision, and until 1883 the committee was dominated by the corresponding

[74] Ibid., 25-26.

secretaries and the treasurer. Although the AMA prided itself in it democratic organization, its direction and strength came from a small group - Simeon S. Jocelyn, George Whipple, and Lewis Tappan.[75]

Corresponding secretaries Jocelyn and Whipple served as policy makers and administrators for the AMA. They had primary responsibility for the operation of the Washington education effort. They approved critical measures, gave directives, dissected the issues as they were brought forth and approved structural changes in the system and set national goals on the basis of financial considerations. Their unceasing communication with the mission field produced a flood of correspondence from Washington to New York headquarters.

The more difficult administrative problems they passed on to the district or field secretaries of the society, who had the responsibility of several southern states. From their northern perch, these officers decided on issues ranging from the establishment of schools, teachers' assignments, types of desks to be used, the construction of a classroom fireplace, and shipping food and supplies. They corresponded with local agents and individual teachers. The three AMA field secretaries were located in New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago (the Cincinnati office was transferred to New York City in 1870).

Ideally, there were five roughly equivalent levels of officials within the organization: the chief policymakers of the respective groups; field agents based in the North who served as liaisons with District of Columbia workers; state district officials; city and local superintendents,

[75] Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction*, 87.

principals, and rural agents; and matrons, teachers, and missionaries (female social workers). Ordinarily, each level reported regularly to the one directly above it. Within local administrative structures, teachers, missionaries, and superintendents were often reminded of their respective positions.

Locally, the success of the AMA's work in the urban South relied upon the ability of its superintendent to administer, implement policy, supervise agents, assess missionary work through progress reports, continually beg and express the needs of the group especially for pay, assess clientele, take stock of the community, keep track of the competition, hold down costs, accept donations, collect money, take feedback, evaluate financial reports, provide funding where necessary, handle improprieties among the ranks, and supervising expansion. They had to opening new missions locally and in the area, account for personnel, plan and strategize, keep up with real estate in order to have some place to conduct mission work, reorganize when plans changed, review reports before they were forwarded, and provide schooling.

The Association's organizational structure, in the District of Columbia, provided for a superintendent, missionaries, principals, matrons, teachers and teachers' assistants who led the work in the urban center. Ideally, the superintendents were the life force of the association. Each was to be a man of elevation who was authoritative, diplomatic, influential, and have the qualities of a missionary: an ordained minister, a Congregationalist, and possibly one who could take the initiative to plant a church. The superintendents were working secretaries and facilitators of the executive committee. In reality, however, the missionaries, principals,

teachers and teachers' assistants communicated freely with the executive committee, carrying forth and gathering much of the intelligence that was needed regarding the day-to-day progress of the missionary body. Rarely did a superintendent's decision lead to the dismissal of the missionary. In fact, missionaries outlasted the superintendents when it came to laboring in the District of Columbia.[76]

Missionaries were the roving emissaries who provided the spiritual care for AMA operations in the urban South. Using Mace as an example, they were very active around the city visiting hospitals, jails, asylums, alms houses and camps. They prayed with friends, constituencies, enemies, and those from far away places as well as distributed Bibles, papers, and school supplies. Missionaries acted as chaplains and pastors. They attempted to fortify the faith. In many cases, children were the reason for their visitations. They preached at various churches in the District and held services at an alms houses. On the Sabbath, they worked on a compressed schedule, preaching at various churches around the city, praying for the sick at the jail, instructing and distributing books as a part of Sabbath schools, providing a space for play and tending to those who expressed the desire to be converted. They assessed the Christian state of the population of the infirmed and provided a means for religious affiliation if the

[76] The AMA administration was under the full understanding that its staff members were to "organize no church with distinctive denominational features or names, unless it be Congregational." See George Whipple to Samuel Hunt, June 21, 1866 (16955), AMAA; M. E. Strieby to George Whipple, November 13, 1865 (89666), AMAA; M. E. Strieby to George Whipple, November 13, 1865 (89666), AMAA; The Superintendents that served in the District of Columbia were W.L. Coan, W.S. Tilden, Breed, John A. Cole and George Marden, George Collins)

person expressed an interest in becoming a Christian and fellowshipping with other Christians. They attended funerals, married freed people without charge – acting as agents authorized by the Bureau to issue certificates of marriage in accordance with a recent act of Congress which provided that all who were living together as husband and wife at the time of Emancipation Proclamation should be recognized as such. They assessed the housing stock and occupancy among the freedmen and provided relief to make housing more comfortable, affordable, and safe. Single women with or without children would receive immediate attention in finding available homes. Ever the reformers, missionaries attempted to suppress Sabbath day rule-breaking among the youth, while advising idle freedmen to seek employment in the North.

Missionaries visited hundreds of black families in Washington and vicinity in two week intervals. They assessed the general station, morale, physical nature, and religiosity. They noted the family structure, size, living conditions, atmosphere, environment, cleanliness, and hygiene. Even the room size, windows, and lumens were taken into account. Population size within the block of homes, shanties, and tenement dwellings was described. In the case of tenements, how many families lived in the building and space usage was noted. The missionary provided the designated name of the location and offered a feeling for the atmosphere. Communication with the families and members of the community was a significant aspect of AMA reconnaissance. In their direct contact with the family in their domicile, the missionaries read the Bible, explained and left tracts before maintaining regular conversations with the family. In close quarters the poor, destitute, or struggling economic state along with the food palate and consumption frequency was gauged. Did they have clothing? Was there religious

contact before? What was their reception of a minister appearing maybe for the first time? Were they willing participants in the gospel exercises of education and supplication? The missionary ascertained whether the field was ripe for ministering to its importance in the work among those who possibly were starving for food and the Word. Recommendations as to how the AMA could harvest the fertile ground of souls were also given.[77]

Isaac Cross frequented many of the hospitals across the city including the Freedmen's and Kalorama Small Pox Hospitals. In most cases, Cross evangelized among black patients who were confined to camps Barker or Kimball (across the Eastern Branch), the notorious jail, and the Asylum at Georgetown. He visited, prayed, provided Bibles and tracts and ultimately acted as Chaplain at Giesboro fort because its chaplain abandoned the post. An incessant writer who looked forward to fortifying the faith of others, Cross was fond of visiting children. Some were patients in the hospital who expressed interest in the subjects and confidence of God's love. [78]

Around the Sabbath, Cross committed to visitations and preaching at various churches. He would occasionally hold services at the almshouse, pray with the inmates at the overpopulated jail, distributing Bibles and tracts along the way. In one of his visitations to sick children at the almshouse he noticed "one of the boys had been sadly attacked with hemorrhage of the lung and his first words brought tears to his eyes and he seemed dearly moved and afterwards preferred conversion." For a brother Fulmer who had cancer over his entire face, with eyes gone, and constantly in pain, Cross intensely fellowshipped with him

[77] Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, April 21, 1866 (16894), AMAA.

[78] Isaac Cross to George Whipple, January 31, 1866 (16717), AMAA.

because it had been “two months since he joined the U.M.C. Church as he had expressed to me a desire to do so,” according to Cross. “I invited the pastor of the church to visit him who did so…. I have visited him three times the present week twice with other ministers would. His patience waivers not, and his comfort increases, and he is very thankful for the Christian attention he receives.”

Cross remained on call to provide immediate relief as required. He developed parcels of land with dwellings to combat the rising cost of rent. Although it was also an attempt to provide comfortable and safe spaces for women, he took pride in supplying cheap rents. “I find that my occupancy of new ground (morally) is supplying cheap rents is working, and bringing forth fruit,” said Cross, “for the benefit of Col. friends as one told me this week that he now obtained his rent very nearly as low as mine adding “this is your work” other instances might be given.”

Cross remained vigilant about the issue of idle youth in the District of Columbia. He actively suppressed Sabbath rule-breaking. Cross emphasized the “purity observance of seventh commandment” and pointed to himself as the steadfast example: “And honesty, I trust not without effect, truthfulness and temperance – tee – totalism which I practice also and have for many years.” Rather than the youth waiting for employment to come to them, Cross advised them to seek northern homes. However few took him up on the advice. “These people are very much closed to the removing,” he observed. “Necessity however will aid in this important work.”

Some youth did take the missionary teachings to heart. He described an instance of overhearing a 12 year old black boy who was going to the pump with a pail for water. The boy repeated "I will not God being my helper in which it seemed so entirely absorbed that he noticed no one." Cross thought he was preparing to recite his lesson for Sabbath school and was taken by the thought that "many all over the country are in the same way preparing for future usefulness. Who will thus repay the toil and expense bestowed by Ch. effort."[79]

Jeremiah Mace was more forward than Cross in his missionary endeavors. He answered the call to evangelism in Murder Bay, a tough District neighborhood with such enthusiasm that AMA leadership acquiesced. Murder Bay was located between 13th and 14th streets and known for theaters, saloons, brothels, and crime. Mace noted to society leadership that the "vices committed in some of these miserable places are of the most disgusting nature."[80]

There Mace visited three hundred black families in the period of two weeks
Most of the families were in a pitiful condition that he could not fully describe. The families, which consisted of father, mother, children, uncles, and aunts, were found living in filthy shanties without light or ventilation. The area around the hovels, as Mace described it, contained unhealthy stagnant waters with freedmen bathing in its midst.

The windowless interiors of the domiciles was not any better. Rooms measuring about six feet square admitted no light and were entirely surrounded by other rooms, so that the members of the family toiled inside days and nights without light. In a space about fifty yards

[79] Isaac Cross to George Whipple, November 29, 1866 (17101), AMAA.

[80] Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, April 21, 1866 (16894), AMAA.

square, hundreds of families slogged next to and on top of one another. Shanties vaulted to tenements with seventeen families on the ground floor, consisting of from two to seven persons each, along with one restaurant and one boarding house. The dance hall doubled as a boarding house where people met for nightly amusements.

Mace made it his point to discuss religion with the whole family even if he could only stand in the doorway. "I found many families in a very destitute condition," wrote Mace. "Some of which had eat nothing during the day. Many families were found naked and knew not where they would get the next meal. Hundreds of these families never saw a minister in their hovels before, and appeared to rejoice that I had called upon them."

Mace was sure to underscore the merits of his personal visitation. "After all that is done to educate this people but little is done by way of visiting them and administering unto them that instruction they so much need at home. I have long been of the opinion that this kind of work was… with the society whose duty it is to hand off in this matter." He asked for permission to spend part of his time visiting among "this class of people. I should be happy to spend one half of the day in this work of merry, and will do it at a cheap rate if you desired. In there three hundred families, consisting of nearly one thousand persons, I have conversed in many of them upon the subject of religion and left papers and books with those who could read."

He continued:

> I hope by the blessing of God the seed sown will in his own time spring up. I have spent most of my time for two weeks which in my judgment is an equivalent for the property purchased. If in your judgment it is not …. me and I will continue until you say

> enough. There never was a time … I have been here when the colored people stood in small need of assistance in numerous ways then at present. It is my desire that friends from about will not withhold from their I hope temporal and spiritual blessings which they so much need.[81]

The lifeblood of the AMA's mission service to the freedmen was the laborers and potential laborers who envisioned themselves as making a difference by serving humanity. As they often faced a shortage of funds and assignments to be fulfilled, it was incumbent upon the AMA to meet certain standards and keep the morale high among potential agents. Success and failure in the selection of religious workers reflected the Association's intent to act as a change agent in the lives of black people and the nation's civil affairs.

Missionaries and teachers needed to be the men or women of the right "stamp" for the respective role they would fulfill. Superintendents, those given local command of the daily interworking of the organization's business, were looking for good primary school teachers, preferably white, energetic, not too young, and those who had the ability to sing. The teachers should be well pleased with the accommodations and not grumble or find fault with the sparsely furnished, dilapidated, or rundown nature of the accommodations provided. Teaching assignments required long periods of devotion. Missionaries were expected to teach two sessions a day in addition to manage classes in the evening. They had to be organized and controlled as they conducted classes. With disease in the city one of the biggest concerns, missionaries had to remain in good health to prevent any interruption in service delivery.

[81] Ibid.

Those who were chosen would have to be able to survey the homes of the children to see who was in need and distress and if the association was meeting the needs of the people. Friends of missionaries were monitored so as to not have their own complaints inflicted upon morale of the workers. One superintendent wrote of his charges' friends: "It is rather unfortunate for her that she has friends in the city who are none too favorable to this work who were talking to the hard lot she is called to endure, and it makes her lot none the easier for her to bear."[82]

Although they occupied the lowest rung in the Yankee educational bureaucracy, the women who answered the call to teach in Washington were held to a high standard. They were to be the professional suffering saints who, armed with their college training and least one year of classroom teaching, would demonstrate innovative ways of managing children fresh from the fields. One resident presented the criteria of the prospective teacher as a "young woman of some valuable experience in teaching and her heart is thoroughly baptized in this work, if she is a woman of true and solid culture and education, and finally if she has no low prejudices to gratify (I don't mean that she should choose to room with a colored woman, I trust you understand me) then, I can give you the use of a nice little church, free of rent, seats movable, (I will provide primary school chairs) composed entirely above persons who have been slaves right in the heart of a neighborhood composed of these people. I wish a good deal for a devoted and motivated woman is not suppressed in Washington. I wish a woman would not rest simply with the routine of the school-room. She would make herself useful in the Sunday

[82] George Whipple to Simeon Jocelyn, March 10, 1862 (15878), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to Samuel Hunt , January 31, 1866 (16724), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to Samuel Hunt, January 13, 1866 (16691), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to Samuel Hunt, November 15, 1865 (16554), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to Samuel Hunt, November 20, 1865 (16563), AMAA.

schools in other ways."[83]

As the Washingtonian implied, the association teacher had to be tireless, endeavoring, and committed to fulfill the task in the city. Laurie Gates, in writing of her assignment at Lincoln General Hospital, noted "I feel under renewed obligation to be more diligent; and to labor with an untiring effort in the work before me, of trying to elevate the benighted and bring the poor and ignorant to a knowledge of an education and of Christ that the cause of my adorable freedmen may be honored." In a later report about her school written during the holiday season, she cherished the fact that they could give their colored friends a "Merry Christmas," which was very gratifying to all – especially the colored friends who seemed to enjoy their little gifts of apples, nuts, candy, raisins, cake, and etc. very much. Dr. McRee, the head surgeon of the hospital, gave remarks to remarks to his staff, parents, children, and teachers, many of whom stood cheering. Others who were there to witness the care that was extended to the nearly one hundred and fifty included Senator James Harlan of Iowa. He also made remarks before Gates concluded that such a banner day deserved another round of providing good time cheer during their New Year exercises. Gifts of "apples, oranges, raisins, candy, cake, nuts, and etc. I feel," said Gates that these little acts of kindness will be productive of good results, for our poor colored friends are forced to feel they are cared for – that they have friends and it will create in them an interest in themselves". [84]

[83] J. McCleary Perkins to George Whipple, February 1, 1865 (16234), AMAA.

[84] Laurie C. Gates to George Whipple, December 31, 1864 (16201), AMAA.

The attempt to labor in the vineyard of Washington and vicinity proved very competitive for the AMA. The influx of thousands of helpless refugees created a vacuum where seven other missionary relief agencies were drawn to lend assistance. In addition to the American Missionary Association, those who officially gathered and were counted by the officials taking note of relief organizations in Washington, D.C. were: the Philadelphia Society of Friends, Old School Presbyterians Church, Reformed Presbyterian Society, American Baptist Home Mission Society, Pennsylvania Freedmen's Aid Association, African Civilization Society, Nation Freedmen's Aid and Relief Association, New England Society of Friends, and New England Aid Society.

The Association felt the pressure of competitiveness as other groups jockeyed, lobbied, and fought for limited space within the camps. Missionaries told of maddening instances where rival associations curried favor from the government to establish a presence with regular meeting space which eventually led to building a brick and mortar school. "There is very strange things going on here," one missionary noted as she penned her monthly report the leadership. "There was a gentlemen here this morning from the Baptist Church Newark, he wants to build a school house, send a missionary, and was encouraged to do so. Dr. Brent has tried to do and is still trying to get us removed or rather to push us out."[85]

Another missionary was even more shocked concerning strange occurrences that had taken place at Mason's Island Camp. After he had compelled one hundred and fifty to become members of the Island church, everything seemed to be going along very pleasantly - sinners

[85] Rachel Patten to Simeon Jocelyn, February 12, 1863 (15916), AMAA.

were converted every week. He looked forward to baptizing ten who had been received by the church and felt quite appreciated when the Old School Presbyterians called on him to describe his work with the freedmen. But intrigue arose when a blatant attempt to supplant the operations of the AMA were revealed with a letter stating that a Presbyterian Clergyman had been appointed a Chaplain of the Camp. The heartbroken missionary relished in his attempt to help many who made their way to the camp. "I have felt a peculiar interest for the poor blacks on Mason's Island from the first I have been with them from beginning and witnessed with pleasure the zeal they have manifested for the property of the church. If I am not very much mistaken, they all are much attached to me."[86]

The AMA was encouraged to measure up to the performances of competing relief organizations. The Educational Commission of Boston sent Miss Carter, who did all she could. She secured the services of a physician and obtained rations for the sick under her care. Her effort was so meritorious that the lead physician, Dr. Daniel Breed, urged that an AMA laborer be placed in the field to do such work, remarking "we can get another physician by winter season if someone will go to collecting ……." To him, the Association's work was "God's work" and emphasized the importance of the organization's care for the sick, suffering poor, and needy, black people.[87]

As more competing relief organizations began to claim affiliation with the AMA, the organization steadily met "blockades" in its attempt to carve out relief space among the city's

[86] Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, January 24, 1865 (16226), AMAA.

[87] W.L. Coan to George Whipple, November 2, 1864 (16153), AMAA.

needy. One of the superintendents, William S. Tilden, told how J. Miller McKim of Philadelphia was in the office of General O. O. Howard on behalf of the American Freedmen's Aid Union, which he said was a union of the National F.R.S., The N.E.F.A.S., the Pittsburg Society and the Baltimore Society. He added that other societies were connected with them by correspondence, mentioning particularly the AMA, and that all circulars and documents for any and all societies should be directed to the A.F.A.U. and he would send duplicates to the various associations. "I took occasion to tell Col. Eaton that the AMA had nothing to do with that 'Union'."[88]

With real estate at a premium, there were few opportunities to plant churches or schools. There were no vacancies and prices were growing worse and worse. Baptists and Quakers opened schools to train black preachers and school children while many within the black community were reluctant, unlike blacks in Norfolk, Virginia, to open their churches to foreign relief agencies.[89]

Despite the reluctance of local churches, AMA missionaries open schools at the encouragement of the community. At the Second Baptist Church, located on Third Street, a missionary noted the strong desire on the part of the people to have a school. However, the pastor, Rev. Albert Bouldin began corresponding with the Free Baptist Mission, a subsidiary of

[88] W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, June 14, 1865 (16386), AMA.

[89]Much to the concern of AMA personnel, there were other educational endeavors in the District of Columbia. Dr. Edward Turney opened a theological school for black preachers. The Quakers opened a school at Camp Barker. William J. Wilson warns that it will be more difficult to sustain a school at 3rd Street because the board of teachers organized a school there. All superintendents were to report to Col. John Eaton. See W.S. Tilden to W.E. Whiting, May 11, 1865 (16345), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to Whipple, June 1, 1865 (16367), AMAA.

the American Baptist Home Mission Society, which presented "blockades" and sent the AMA's superintendent looking for space in a nearby Methodist church.[90]

Not all attempts to provide relief when faced with competition went sour. Often the societies collaborated to deliver aid to the community. An opportunity arose when the contraband camp on Twelfth Street closed and moved to Arlington, Virginia, leaving contrabands, shanties, and tenements. The American Tract Society also had to pick up stakes and divest itself of the large chapel or school house which they had built a year earlier for $1,000. With the help of the government, The Tract Society considered moving the building to Arlington, but the tract agent asked the N.F.R.A.to buy the property. Realizing its limitations, the N.F.R.A requested that the AMA purchase the school, which one hundred scholars were attending. "We have never used," understanding the diplomacy needed in such delicate matters, "your society name in our conversations with the Tract Society Agent, – we are not aware whether the Tract Society would favor you or our Relief Society the most."

The NFRA already had two schools in operation and gauged that there was room for a

[90] W. L. Coan to George Whipple, August 8, 1864 (16067), AMAA; The AMA will become embroiled in a property dispute of historic proportion as a result of Bouldin assigning a section of the grounds to four trustees. According to the court report, Reverend Albert Bouldin and his wife secured the deed to property located at Fourth and L Streets, Northwest, in 1857 for members of a prayer which met regularly at their house. In 1864, The Bouldins conveyed a small portion of the property to the elected trustees, Joseph Alexander, Charles Alexander, John Middleton, and William Minor. After dissension arose between pastor and trustees over the ownership of the land, a lawsuit was filed and settled in a lower court in favor of the trustees. On appeal in 1872, Chief Justice William Strong of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia affirmed the decree in favor of the trustees. For an intriguing look into the formation of an early black church, the Third Baptist Church, the events, and the decision see 82 U.S. 131 21 L. Ed.69 15 Wall.131 Bouldin v. Alexander (December Term, 1872) in United States Reports. Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Supreme Court of the United States, December Term, 1872. Reported by John William Wallace, Vol. XV. Washington, D.C.: W.H. of O.H. Morrison, 1873.

dozen more. Administrators considered giving one of the schools to the AMA but it did not have the permanency which they thought the association needed. Of the opportunity to purchase the building, there was a certain immediacy. “Now, is not this an opportunity for the missionary society to establish a school in a good field?” wrote Baker. “We think a larger settlement of colored people is to grow up there. Already enough to make a school of over a hundred are settled there. The building stands on a street and could possibly stand there for some years. I think the building could be secured for $500 or less, it should be 50 to $100 should be expended for improvements on it.”[91]

Perhaps the AMA's most interesting work in the capital was conducted by William J. Wilson. Wilson had been born on a southern plantation, but raised in the District of Columbia. For two decades until 1863, he served a teacher and principal of public school No. 1 for black children in Brooklyn. Ten years before leaving New York, Wilson became active in the abolitionist Movement, working as a correspondent for Frederick Douglass’ newspaper. Wilson wrote under the pen name “EDIT” and published in other black newspapers and magazines as well. Wilson was so consumed by his writing and the issues of abolitionism that his pastor complained to the school board that he was neglecting his pupils. His rousing anti-slavery speeches at Cooper Institute between 1862 and 1863 annoyed parents, the School Board, and members of the community. Wilson "excited the wrath of every Copperhead-Celtic member of the local board of education,” who were about to remove him from his school. A Mr. Cardoso,

[91] George E. Baker to Simeon Jocelyn, January 1, 1864 (15971), AMAA.

a South Carolinian whom Wilson had befriended, began working against them, collecting signatures from parents. The case was referred to the local board by the school board of the city. Wilson's removal was approved at a session of the local board during the absence of the president (Wilson's friend). Before the city board acted, Wilson resigned. He had had opposition from several sources, all of it--according to James McHugh Smith, who recommended him to the AMA--unjustified. "The truth is," Wilson wrote "my course was to amortize slavery for some of these gentlemen to longer remain and so I resigned."

He went on an exploratory visit among the schools for the freedmen in the Washington area and consulted with the education committee of the NFRA at Washington, for whom he contracted to teach one of their schools temporarily and applied for a commission in an AMA school.[92] His wife was also employed in another of the NFRA schools; their daughter was with them, and they all wish to work together. Wilson was happy to find Henry Highland Garnet in Washington, a man who would be "invaluable to us all."

Wilson was appointed to a school at Camp Barker. School began Monday, June 27th, 1864, with 72 pupils; for Tuesday there was 125, and by Friday 150. The condition of the buildings was deplorable, and Wilson found it impossible to imagine how his predecessor had managed without a privy or how the children could be taught "the principles of morality and religion afford even self-respect" if such matters were not attended to. There was no commitment to save an empty building sadly in need of whitewash, with a few broken seats

[92] William J. Wilson to George Whipple, June 6, 1864 (16022), AMAA.

and black boards. He also had reason to complain about salary. His was $50 per month, his wife's $20. Board cost $40, leaving only $30 over wages for all other expenses.[93]

With the swelling competition, rising rents, and the organization's notoriety beginning to grow, AMA personnel fanned out across the city to find affordable accommodations for its workers, a freedmen's school, and homes for freedmen themselves. There was a constant challenge of keeping prices down so that the benevolent workers could work without thinking about being driven from their home. As more missionaries and teachers began to arrive in the city, word about expenses and manageable rent began to spread. One AMA missionary managed a residence with several teachers and noticed there was a tendency for the prices to be held "down, down, even now we have many outside friends who desire us to increase our home here."[94]

Other missionaries scoured the neighborhoods searching for suitable lots to advance the cause of the AMA through schooling. One appealing lot, located at Eleventh Street near Second Street, measured two squares from another known location southward. The two lots together measured forty two feet in the front and ninety five feet in depth. Another set of lots could be obtained on O Streets near Thirteenth Street, at the edge of the city and the best place to found a school because of its elevated ground and its remoteness from existing schools. The lots, the missionary noted, could be had for a price of thirty five cents per square

[93] DeBoer, *His truth is Marching On*, 85.

[94] W.S. Coan to George Whipple, October 6, 1864 (16115), AMAA.

foot that would be paid in six, twelve and eighteen month increments on lots that were four hundred dollars each.[95]

There were times when an AMA affiliation worked in a missionary's favor. W. L. Coan had seen the District of Columbia phenomena where houses were sold before the foundation was laid, families waited for months without securing a home, and he was told "you will not get one for a long time to come." Coan followed an advertisement to the house being sold by E.L. Stevens, an Oberlin professor who happened to be moving his family back to Ohio. "I was the first to be at the house and……. two-three others followed along soon I had never seen Mr. Stevens before but after telling him who I was, what my buss," reported Coan. Stevens in turn gave him a right of first refusal until Mrs. Coan could see the property.

The house was on Capitol Hill, a short turn before entering the Capitol grounds – located on Maryland Ave #353 between 2nd and 3rd Streets east. It contained twelve rooms, water was carried throughout it, was plainly furnished. It had a large garden - plenty of grapes, a barn in the back of the garden and connecting with the premises and also fronting on Second street was another lot upon which Coan planned to build a cheap barrack school house for 50 to 100 children to which, he believed, there would be no objections made. The rent was one hundred dollars per month. Real estate was much lower in the eastern part of the capital. He believed the location was a very healthy one for the teachers.[96]

Isaac Cross's reason for purchasing real estate in the city was to show altruism toward

[95] William J. Wilson to George Whipple, May 28, 1865 (16354), AMAA.

[96] W. L. Coan to George Whipple, September 9, 1864 (16081), AMAA.

the freedmen. Cross surveyed the landscape of suitable housing for the former bondsmen and saw crowded tenements, alley dwellings, hovels, and hastily erected shanties. He saw Murder Bay and decided to do something about the discomfort and the lack of housing. In May, 1866, he purchased two buildings; one a residential five room house and the other a school room. He purchased the lot that fronted Canal Street measuring 41 X 66 feet from the former owner, who paid six hundred dollars, for two hundred and fifty dollars, a price he considered extremely low. After he completed that transaction, Cross then purchased the adjoining lot, size 41 X 66 extending to 5th Street thus making the whole lot 132 X 41 feet on both Canal and 5th Street. When he finished his acquisitions, Cross had a total of nineteen rooms. "My sole purpose has been to benefit freed people by giving them low rents and influencing landlords to put down rents by furnishing an example," he wrote. "My object is accomplished to a considerable extent and what is surprising has proved that the investment is really lucrative, even at the price of renting."[97]

He rented a room at $.75 per month, one at $1.00, eight at $1.25 and nine at $1.50 per month on one lot, two rooms at $1.25, and three at $1.50 on his first purchase. He received one hundred and eighty dollars for rent annually and was asked to present his plans for the lots to the association of "Friends" in Philadelphia with a view to transferring his interest to them. Cross wished to transfer his interest to the AMA and could see rent collection at three thousand dollars annually as a moderate expectation for income and thus paying for the whole property

[97] Ibid.

in three years and accomplishing much good.[98]

No matter how altruistic the AMA was, race remained an impediment to doing good deeds in Washington, D.C. Scholars have noted that 1865 was the period in the District where whites would have to instantaneously accept blacks as fellow citizens. The masses of migrants coupled with the aegis of a Radical congress made an angry white city council even angrier. The realization of the permanency of the new black residents caused some of the council members to lash out with pseudo-science and race-based vitriol. In preparation for the December suffrage bill before Congress, a committee drafted a statement of the city's official view: "The white man, being the superior race, must… rule the black…Why he is black and we white, or why we the superior and he the inferior race are matters past our comprehension. It, then, becomes a civil as well as a Christian duty to weigh his capacity for advancement in civil rights, and the only test by which his claim to the right of suffrage can best be ascertained will be by a comparison with the white race under like circumstances. If it took the ancient Briton a thousand years to emerge from his only half-civilized condition ….to reach the point to qualify him for the exercise of his right, how long would it reasonably take the black man, who but two hundred years ago was brought from Africa…" Observing that some blacks had advanced in intelligence and might qualify for suffrage, the councilmen nevertheless declared "that not one grown-up Negro in a hundred can read or write" and that "more forcible means exist why ladies of a given age should be entitled to the privilege." The United States was a white man's

[98] Isaac Cross to George Whipple, December 29, 1866 (17135), AMAA.

country: let the dissatisfied colored man go elsewhere. "Already does there exist among the laboring men in our midst, a deep-seated hostility because employment is made more scarce by their [Negroes'] great influx into this city since the rebellion began, and a trivial circumstance will be made a pretext for collision."[99]

The council discarded an alternative statement: "That we are not opposed to granting the right of suffrage to colored men simply because they are colored men, but that we believe the safety of our free institutions demands that the elective franchise should only be granted to men who can read or write" or to those who, "without regard to color," possess mental and moral qualifications acceptable to an enlightened public." [100]

Nowhere was public sentiment towards the freedmen more clear than in the observations of the writer who wrote under the pen name M.C.A. The true Washingtonian "hates the sight of a nigger," he declared, unless he is a slave. In glum, unhappy silence, they stand in the windows; not a voice cheers, not a handkerchief waves. "What a dreadful pass things is come to, with all these niggers saddled onto our poor little town. What's agoin' to become of 'em without masters? They were made for servants," said one, not two minutes ago. This is the only significance the slavery lover sees in the sea of human life, this surging mass of women and of men.[101]

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[99] Green, *Secret City*, 77.

[100] Ibid.

[101] *Independent*, April 26, 1866,

The AMA remained conscious of the general sentiment toward their constituents as they considered locations to conduct their educational endeavors. J.W. Alvord advised the organization's leadership to decide in the affirmative on a lot that was being offered by Columbian College, otherwise "someone will come along and offer a higher price to keep a "nigger school out of the neighborhood."[102]

The influx of blacks into the District of Columbia from the rural outer boroughs signaled a shift in the way they viewed their destiny. They would no longer be passive players who stood on the sidelines as the crown jewels of freedom past them by. They followed the beacon of freedom into the care of the Federal Government and Freedmen's Aid Societies only to be detained in some of the most horrid conditions in the city. They had an idea of freedom. However, that idea was drastically skewed due to the ill-preparedness of their hosts. Through an attempt to transition blacks from slavery to freedom, the struggle between AMA missionaries, freedmen, and the War Department illustrates the differing outlooks for providing relief and constructing the gateway to freedom. Freedmen wanted what they believed they deserved. Missionaries described the freedmen as merely deserving souls who should be shepherded correctly. The War Department, emphasizing self reliance, wanted to make blacks self sufficient. With freedom defined within the economic parameters of new labor roles, freedmen struggled to find sympathy for their plight and friends in their endeavors to be free.

[102] John Alvord to George Whipple, May 1, 1868 (17554), AMAA.

Chapter 5
A Call to Arms: Church and State in the Promised Land

In June 1865 the American Missionary Association's Corresponding Secretary, George Whipple, wrote to Col. John Eaton, the Superintendent of Schools for Washington, D.C. to welcome and congratulate the Freedmen's Bureau official for opening an office in the city. "I was glad to learn that you are to occupy so important a place at Washington, and also in the Confidence of General Howard. I congratulate both you and General [Howard]…….fancy will be your relations to each other." The penultimate reason for the letter was to apprise Eaton of the association's mission, success, and "wants". "We have there three schools one under the care of colored teachers Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Principal, in a house purchased by us at Camp Barker. The house……needs repair, furniture and so on, but it stands nowhere, or in other words in the street, and may be ordered off at any time." Whipple did not hesitate to ask: "shall we buy land and repair and furnish the house or shall we ask the Bureau to furnish a building suitably located and furnished; or can they secure for us ground, on which to remove our building?" asked Whipple inquisitively. "Ultimately, we believe Congress will provide buildings and free schools for blacks of the District and it seems as though we might house our friends better than in buying land and building schools houses in such places."[1]

The record of the school to which Whipple referred shows three teachers, scholars and their studies for a period of three months in 1865: March, No. of Pupils 341; April, 345; May,

[1]George Whipple to John Eaton, June 4, 1865, Records of the Superintendent of Education for the District of Columbia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865 – 1872, National Archives, Microfilm Publication M1056 (Roll 10), Letters Received.

329. The average attendance was 221, 215, and 208 respectively. Those who could read and spell numbered 137, 135, and 129. Those who committed to mental math were 115, 120, and 118. The students who pursued written arithmetic were 60, 60, and 57. And those who possessed a sense of geography registered at 50, 54, and 51. Writing produced good returns with 90, 95, and 92. All possessed the forte to sing, while the administration thought all made good progress in their studies from month to month.[2]

"You will see by these reports that the school is one of no small importance. There must be land under general control there hitherto used for Hospital or Barracks grounds not now needed, and buildings now unused. Would it not be consistent with your places to secure such for us?" Whipple asked. "We have another school on 3rd Street in a meeting house, the use of which is secured to us by a loan of some hundreds of dollars a year. – At this school on Capitol Hill a miserable house for which we pay rent, Can there not be a house assigned to us in that region for our schools of fifty scholars each under [our] teachers? God be with you and bless you in your labors".[3]

Whipple's efforts to invoke the aid of the Bureau and strike a bargain for the AMA revealed a fundamental compatibility between missionary zeal and a keen business sense in freedmen's education. Aided by the Freedmen's Bureau, the AMA sought to use the most economical means to educate the largest number of blacks in Washington. The result was a collaboration that formed the basis for the AMA's activities in the urban South.

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

Although almost all Southern cities and small towns witnessed an influx of black migrants after emancipation, Washington experienced the most dramatic population changes. Its black population grew by 223% between 1860 and 1870. Baltimore, a city to the north, by way of comparison, experienced a growth of 42 percent over the same period. In the District of Columbia as a whole, the black population increased from 14,316 or 19% of the total population in 1860 to 43,422 or 33% in 1870. As discussed in the previous chapter, part of this increase was due to the influx of migrants during the Civil War, as slaves from Maryland and Virginia increasingly flocked to the capital in search of freedom after Congress abolished slavery in the District in April of 1862. After the abolition of slavery in Maryland in 1864, in Virginia in 1865, and with the end of the Civil War, the migration continued apace. Migration to the city peaked in 1863 with around 4,500 new arrivals, but after the war nearly ten thousand additional former slaves came to the city in search of the opportunities they believed would make their new freedom meaningful. Washington, D.C. contained only 3,185 slaves in 1860. However, its free population steadily grew as the influx of fugitives and "contrabands," joined the ranks of the urban black community as they fled from neighboring counties in Maryland and Virginia. Ultimately, the total black population of the District increased from 14,316 in 1860 to 38,663 in 1867. [4]

Many of the new arrivals, whom one black clergyman called "the Ransomed", were not prepared for many of the features of a budding urban economy. Irregular unemployment,

[4] Johnston, *Surviving Freedom*, 107-110.

extreme residential destitution - overcrowded tenements, dilapidated shanties - unemployment, overcrowding, and poverty caused many to seek assistance.[5] By late 1864 as many as fifty thousand refugees had moved within the line of forts that surrounded the city. Many of those who remained in the city limits resided in impoverished alleys while others chose abandoned army fortifications, the "Island" of southwest Washington, the neighborhood around Boundary Street, and across the Anacostia River in Uniontown. The very names of some of these communities indicated their condition: Goose Level, Vinegar Hill, Foggy Bottom,

[5] Daniel Alexander Paine, Welcomed to the Ransomed; or, Duties of the Colored Inhabitants of the District of Columbia (Baltimore: Bull and Tuttle, 1861), 12, as collected in Payne, *Sermons and Addresses*, 1853-1891, ed. Charles Killian (New York: Arno, 1972); On local attitudes, See John V. W. Vandenburgh to William F. Spurgin, November 22, 1865, Letters Received (hereafter cited as LR), Vol. I, No. 263, reel 4; A.K. Browne to Selden N. Clark, November 5, 1867, LR, III, 803, reel 9 Spurgin to Clark, August 31, 1865, Annual Quarterly, and Monthly Reports (hereafter AQMR), frame number (f.n.) 267, reel 13, all in Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the District of Columbia, Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1869, Record Group 105 (National Archives and Record Service, Washington, D.C.), National Archives Microfilm Series, M-1055 (herein after NAMS M-1055). Hereafter, roman numerals indicate volume designations and Arabic numerals indicate item designations for letters sent and received by the bureau, except in the case of reports and unregistered letters, for which microfilm frame numbers (for the first page of the document) are given. Selden N. Clark was one of a number of assistant adjutants general who handled the assistant commissioner's correspondence. Others were William W. Rogers, Stuart Eldridge, Franklin E. Town, and David G. Swain. On Reconstruction politics in Washington, see Howard Gillette Jr., *Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning, and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington, D.C.* (Baltimore, 1995), chap. 3; James H. Whyte. *The Uncivil War: Washington during the Reconstruction, 1865-1878* (New York, 1958); Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington: Village and Capital, 1800-1878* (Princeton, 1962), chaps. 12-15; For an understanding of Conditions of the freedpeople in the nation's capital: Elaine Cutler Everly, "The Freedmen's Bureau in the National Capital" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1971), 101; Allan John Johnston, "Surviving Freedom: The Black Community in Washington, D.C., 1860-1880" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1980), 291-300 (Johnston's thesis was issued by Garland Publishing in 1993 under the same title, with few changes to the text apart from a new introduction.) See also the discussion of the Freedmen's Bureau in Lois Elaine Horton, "The Development of Federal Social Policy for Blacks in Washington, D.C. after Emancipation" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1977), 63-77, 87-90, 92-100, and 123-27. Carol Faulkner, *Women's Radical Reconstruction: The Freedmen's Aid Movement* (Philadelphia, 2004) contains a good deal of material on the District of Columbia because of the presence there of several prominent activist women. See especially chaps. 5 and 7. However, its primary focus is on the ideas and actions of the female activists themselves rather than the bureau. Sections of Katherine Masur's book *An Example for all the Land: The Politics of Race and Citizenship in the District of Columbia, 1862-1878*.

Hell's Bottom, Bloodfield, Prather's Alley and Nigger Hill. The worst slums of all were found in the very center of Washington near the old canal was a section known as "Murder Bay."[6]

In 1863 the District of Columbia was the largest of the cities of the upper South in terms of total black population. Members of the American Missionary Association considered Washington an attractive "field of labor" and symbolic, in practical terms, as a result of its economic, political, and educational prominence among members of Congress. From the outset, the city acquired a reputation for being rather dangerous in two respects: the climate was hot and exceedingly "unhealthy," especially during the summer, and the white population was bitter and prone to retaliatory measures. The teachers had a heightened sense of missionary self-sacrifice, and to some who ventured south, Washington was appealing for just those reasons.

Washington was a place on which the AMA descended upon to equip rural southern migrants with northern free-labor principles and help them adapt to the social and economic conditions of the urban South. In Washington, as in other cities, the AMA confronted an economy already steeped in free (labor) market principles. Rather than seeking to reconstitute the labor market, the association worked to prepare freedpeople to participate in a market that

[6] Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, 1967), 58-65; Lois E. Horton, "The Days of Jubilee: Black Migration during the Civil War and Reconstruction," in Francine Curro Cary, ed*., Urban Odyssey: A Multicultural History of Washington, D.C.* (Washington, 1996), 65-78; Ira Berlin et. Al., eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867*. Series I, Vol. I: *The Destruction of Slavery* (Cambridge, Eng., 1985), 159-67; Ibid., Vol. II: *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South* (Cambridge, Eng., 1993), 243-62; Margret Leech, *Reveille in Washington, 1860-1865* (New York, 1941), 235-252; James Borchert, *Alley Life in Washington: Family, Community, Religion , and Folklife in the City, 1850-1970* (Urbana, Ill., 1980); Donald E. Press, "South of the Avenue: From Murder Bay to the Federal Triangle," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C.*, 51 (1984), 51-70; James H. Whyte, *Uncivil War: Washington During the Reconstruction* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958), 32;

was already established and inculcated values of industriousness, frugality, and regularity. However, in the nation's capital, missionary agents also encountered mass unemployment and severe overcrowding resulting from mass migration of the black masses, which on a relative scale anticipated the larger migrations of the twentieth century. These conditions forced them to consider new approaches to questions of sanitation, housing, and employment.[7]

Washington was the temporary home to a large number of agents of northern freedmen's aid societies, who not only provided a great deal of support and assistance in the transition from slavery to freedom. To a greater extent, the benevolent policies in Washington emerged from complex negotiations between the religious agents and bureaucratic officials, many of them clergy, on whose efforts and enthusiasm aid heavily depended. The role of female benevolent activists in particular has been extensively explored in a recent book by Carol Faulkner.[8] Finally, Jacqueline Jones observes, the American Missionary Association represents an ambitious effort in American history to test the apparatus of a modern, administrative state.[9] Though clearly a legacy of the expanded wartime state and always regarded as temporary, the American Missionary Association explored the possibilities as well

[7] On free labor ideology, see Eric Foner, *Politics and Ideology in the Age of Civil War* (New York, 1980), 97-127; Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War (New York, 1970), 11-39; Berlin et. al., eds, Wartime Genesis of Free Labor, 2-6 and 15-16; and Jonathan A. Glickstein, Concepts of Free Labor in Antebellum America (New Haven, 1991) for the influence of Free-labor ideology on Freedmen's Bureau agents, see in particular Foner, Reconstruction, 143-70; and James D. Schmidt, "' A Full-Fledged Government of Men'": Freedmen's Bureau Labor Policy in South Carolina, 1865-1868," in Cimbala and Miller, eds. Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction, 219-60.

[8] Carol Faulkner, *Women's Radical Reconstruction: The Freedmen's Aid Movement* (Philadelphia: University of Pennslvania Press, 2004).

[9] Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love*, 18.

as the limitations of benevolent social action in guiding social change. This was especially evident in Washington. The challenge of the urban environment probed the limits of its capabilities and revealed unexpected elements of its character. Therefore it is impossible fully to understand the role of the association in the postbellum America state without considering the urban elements of its southern activities.[10]

With the growing population and within tight budgetary constraints, private and public relief organizations turned to one another to alleviate the unemployment, overcrowding, and poverty that confronted African Americans in the nation's capital. The Freedmen's Bureau, with the help of associations like the AMA, embarked upon an extensive program of sanitation, public housing, education, and employment - which sometimes relocated unemployed workers to other parts of the Union, including several northern states that were unaccustomed to

[10] Among the works in this growing field are Clara M. DeBoer, "The Role of Afro-Americans in the Work of the American Missionary Association," (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1973); Clara M. DeBoer, *Be Jubilant My Feet: African American Abolitionists in the American Missionary Association, 1839-1861* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994); *His Truth is Marching On: African Americans Who Taught the Freedmen for the American Missionary Association* (New York: Garland Press, 1995); Robert C. Morris, Reading, '*Riting and Reconstruction: the Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861-1970* (Chicago, 1976); Jaqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865-1873* (Chapel Hill, 1980); Joe Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861-1890* (Atlanta, Ga., 1986) and James D. Andersen, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, 1988). Clara DeBoer in "The Role of Afro-Americans in the Work of the American Missionary Association, States that of 467 black workers identified, 174 were women. The number of male workers is not necessarily the same as the number of male teachers. Some of those men included in her number were local of imported ministers whose church work was supported by the American Missionary Association. The ministers did not engage in teaching. DeBoer, 496. The role of Female activists during this era: *Carol Faulkner, Women's Radical Reconstruction: The Freedmen's Aid Movement* (Philadelphia, 2004); On the work of freedmen's aid societies, see also James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Princeton, 1964), 160-77 and 393-405; Robert H. Bremner, *The Public Good: Philanthropy and Welfare in the Civil War Era* (New York, 1980), 98-110 and 129-33; Carol Faulkner, '"A Proper Recognition of Our Manhood': The African Civilization Society and the Freedmen's Aid Movement," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, 24 (January 2000), 41-62; Joe M. Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: the American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861-1890* (Athens, Ga., 1986); Jaqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865-1873* (Chapel Hill, 1980), 14-30, and Ronald E. Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862-1875* (Westport, Con., 1980), chap. 1 and 5.

receiving large-scale black migration.[11] Relief organizations initiated ambitious projects that went far beyond the normal limits of state power in nineteenth-century America.

As elsewhere in the South, the AMA in the District of Columbia worked to protect the legal and labor rights of freed people, to fortify families, and to encourage the formalization of marriages. The association also maintained numerous schools, several on the outskirts of Washington and a few within the city limits, including some on the grounds of hospitals, and another at Freedmen's Village. It maintained a library for civilians and soldiers. Missionaries visited homes, churches, alms houses, hospitals, barracks, neighborhoods, and schools. In addition to providing potential housing options, the AMA attempted to relieve the city of overcrowding, destitution, and poverty, by helping to relocate and find employment for freedpeople. The American Missionary Association contributed to the education of black children by collaborating with the Freedmen's Bureau in the use of government transportation for teachers and freedmen, buildings for schools, furniture, equipment for classrooms, and food and fuel for schoolteachers at government rates. It cooperated with Freedmen's aid societies that operated schools in the District by supplying curriculum materials. It laid the foundation for a school system for black children. It also supported industrial schools where freedwomen were trained as seamstresses, and its members were integral to the founding of Howard University, thus solidifying the capstone of the New England experiment in the urban South.

Washington was a difficult place to reside, especially during the summers of 1866-1868.

[11] Harrison, Robert, "Welfare and Employment Policies of the Freedmen's Bureau in the District of Columbia," The *Journal of Southern History* (72:1), 175.

The migratory addition of freedmen to the population put new stress upon the municipal infrastructure. Gravel and cobblestone streets were muddied and shredded by heavily wagons carrying army supplies, leaving the main thoroughfares all but impassable. Omnibuses pounded choking dust from the impassable streets as streetcars lumbered to their destinations. So slow were the forms of transportation that passengers preferred to walk rather than be late or ride in cars with women carrying baskets.

The city leadership seemed baffled about how to pay for paving and lighting the streets along with providing new sewer lines around the city. Lack of proper sewage facilities exposed the city to epidemics of dysentery and typhoid fever. The masses of unemployables-young orphans, widows with small children, the aged, and the physically disabled who roamed the streets without any place to go -- coupled with the discomfort of the ill-equipped city discouraged many from settling in Washington. Visitors to the capital and congressmen apparently shared the views of Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune: "the rents are high, the food is bad, the dust is disgusting, the mud is deep and the morals are deplorable.""[12]

The greatest expansion of AMA activity in Washington, D.C. took place between 1865 and 1870. One event of great significance to the program took place in 1865 with the creation of the Bureau of Freedmen, Abandoned Lands, and Refugees. The Freedmen's Bureau was established in the War Department by Congress on March 3, 1865. The Bureau's task was the supervision and management of all matters relating to refugees, freedmen, and lands abandoned or seized during the Civil War. Specifically, its mission was to provide relief and help

[12] Green, *Secret City*, 91-92; *The Independent*, March 15th 1866.

freedmen become self-sufficient. To do this, Bureau officials issued rations and clothing, operated hospitals and refugee camps, and supervised labor contracts. Additionally, the Bureau managed apprenticeship disputes and complaints, assisted benevolent societies in the establishment of schools, helped freedmen in legalizing marriages entered into during slavery, and provide transportation to refugees and freedmen who were attempting to reunite with their family or relocate to other parts of the country. The Bureau also helped black soldiers, sailors, and their heirs collect bounty claims, pensions, and back pay. [13]

[13] Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller, eds., *The Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction: Reconsiderations* (New York, 1999), x. For more prominent examples of the "New Freedmen's Bureau Historiography," see Paul Cimbala, *Under the Guardianship of the Nation: The Freedmen's Bureau and the Reconstruction of Georgia, 1865-1870* (Athens, Ga., 1997); Barry A. Crouch, *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texans* (Austin, Tex., 1992); Randy Finley, *From Slavery to Uncertain Freedom: The Freedmen's Bureau in Arkansas, 1865-1869* (Fayetteville, Ark., 1996); Donald G. Nieman, *To Setthe Law in Motion: The Freedmen's Bureau and the Legal Rights of Blacks, 1865-1868* (Millwood, N.Y., 1979); and Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, 1988), 142-70. For a review of recent scholarship, see John David Smith, "'The Work It Did Not Do Because It Could Not': Georgia and the 'New' Freedmen's Bureau Historiography," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 82 (Summer 1998), 331-49, Example of so-called post-revisionist work include William S. McFeely, *Yankee Stepfather: General O.O. Howard and the Freedmen* (New Haven, 1968), 1-9 and 149-65; Louis S. Gerteis, *From Contraband to Freedmen: Federal Policy toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865* (Westport, Conn., 1973), 183-92; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York, 1979), 364-86. Earlier historiography is examined in LaWanda Cox, "From Emancipation to Segregation: National Policy and Southern Blacks," in John B. Boles and Evelyn Thomas Nolen, eds., Interpreting Southern History: Historiographical Essays in Honor of Sanford W. Higginbotham (Baton Rouge, 1987), 224-28. George R. Bentley, *A History of the Freedmen's Bureau* (Philadelphia, 1955) remains the only general history of the bureau. There is useful information on the work of the bureau in Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (New York, 1978), 20-21, 32-34, 128-32, and 153-577. Michael W. Fitzgerald deals briefly with the agency in his study of popular politics in Mobile but says little about the ways in which it addressed specifically urban problems. Michael W. Fitzgerald, *Urban Emancipation: Popular Politics in Reconstruction Mobile, 1860-1890* (Baton Rouge, 2002), 43-48. Much the same is true of recent accounts of the black experience in other southern cities. See, for example, Steven Tripp, *Yankee Town, Southern City: Race and Class Relations in Civil War Lynchburg* (New York, 1997); Michael B. Chesson, *Richmond after the War, 1865-1900* (Richmond, 1981); Wilbert L. Jenkins, *Seizing the New Day: African Americans in Post-Civil War Charleston* (Bloomington, 1998); George C. Wright, *Life behind a Veil: Blacks in Louisville, Kentucky, 1865-1930* (Baton Rouge, 1985); and John Blassingame, *Black New Orleans, 1860-1880* (Chicago, 1973). There is some discussion of the bureau's operations in New Orleans in Howard A. White, *The Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1970), 76-83, 87, 89, 166-200. Despite its title, Caryn Cosse Bell, "'Une Chimere: The Freedmen's Bureau in Creole New Orleans," in Cimbala and Miller, eds., *Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction*, 140-60, has little to say about the agency's activities in the city itself.

In May 1865, Andrew Johnson appointed Maj. Gen. Oliver Otis Howard as Commissioner of the Bureau. Howard, a religious man who disdained liquor and profanity, established his headquarters in Washington, D. C. Assistant commissioners were appointed to supervise the work of the Bureau in the states. Congress assigned to the bureau duties and responsibilities that previously had been assigned to military commanders and special agents of the Treasury Department. Under the initial Act, the Bureau was to have been terminated one year after the end of the Civil War. Although the bureau was in the War Department, its work was primarily social and economic in nature.

In the District of Columbia, field office operations began in June 1865, when Col. John Eaton, Jr., was appointed Assistant Commissioner with headquarters in the city of Washington. Eaton was responsible for Bureau affairs in the District, the Freedmen's Village in Virginia and farms south of the Potomac, and the government farms in Saint Mary's County, Maryland. He would soon be given temporary and permanent jurisdiction over counties in Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. The organizational structure of the Assistant Commissioner's staff consisted of a superintendent of education, an assistant inspector general (from time to time he served as the assistant adjutant general), an assistant quartermaster and disbursing officer, a superintendent of marriages, and a surgeon in chief. Subordinate to these officers were the assistant superintendents, or subassistant commissioners as they later became known, who commanded the subdistricts.

In July 1865, Commissioner Howard instructed the assistant commissioners to place an

officer in each state to serve as Superintendent of Schools. Superintendents were instructed to supervise education of refugees and freedmen, secure protection for schools and teachers, aid in maintaining schools, and correspond with benevolent societies in securing teachers to staff schools. The Superintendent also was required to help the Assistant Commissioner in making reports

In October 1865, a degree of centralized control was established over Bureau educational activities in the states when Rev. John W. Alvord was appointed Inspector of Finances and Schools. In January 1867, Alvord was divested of his financial responsibilities, and he was appointed General Superintendent of Education. In August 1865, Rev. John Kimball was appointed superintendent of education for the District of Columbia and served until replaced by Major D.G. Swaim in October 1869. Major W.L. VanDerlip succeeded Swaim in December 1869 and remained in the position until August 1870, when educational activities in the District of Columbia were discontinued.

The AMA's decision to collaborate with the Freedmen's Bureau during Reconstruction was born out of the friendships that solidified prior to the start of the Civil War. The relationship was unique as AMA missionaries performed at a symbiotic cadence for jobs, rations, schools supplies, and transportation in the effort to help freedmen. It is also distinguishable for the seamless overlap between what can be understood as the church and state. Complimentary gestures, courtesy movements, and synergistic objectives made an interdependent bureaucracy out of the two Reconstruction efforts.

The crisis was mounting in the nation's capital as competition, race relations, and an expanding economy was beginning to erode many of the gains the AMA had made with the freedmen. The Association and the Bureau entered into a nuanced partnerships partnership in an effort to protect legal and labor rights, provide transportation, formalize marriages, educate the black masses, obtain curriculum materials, support industrial education, and birth a university The collaboration between to the two organization sheds new light on the tested boundaries between church and state during the nineteenth century. This section looks at the work of the American Missionary Association's in the District of Columbia.

As elsewhere in the South, AMA in the District of Columbia worked to protect the legal and labor rights of freedpeople and to fortify families, and to encourage the formalization of marriages. The association also maintained numerous schools, several on the outskirts of Washington, a few within including on the grounds of hospitals, and another at Freedmen's Village. It sustained a library for civilians and soldiers. Between two to five missionaries visited homes, churches, alms houses, hospitals, barracks, neighborhoods, and schools. In addition to providing potential housing options, the AMA attempted to relieve the city of overcrowding, destitution, and poverty, by helping to relocate and find employment for freedpeople. The American Missionary Association contributed to the education of black children by collaborating with the Freedmen's Bureau in the use of government transportation – for teachers and freedmen, and buildings for schools, furniture, and equipment for classrooms, and food and fuel for schoolteachers at government rates; it cooperated with Freedmen's aid societies that operated schools in the district by supplying curriculum materials; and by

skeptically collaborating activities, it laid the foundation for a school system for black children. It also supported industrial schools where freedwomen were trained as seamstresses, and its members were ultimately integral to the founding of Howard University, thus solidifying the capstone of the New England experiment in the urban South.

John Eaton's career began as a military chaplain in the 27th Ohio Infantry. A New Englander by birth, Eaton was a Dartmouth graduate who served as the superintendent of schools in Toledo, Ohio, before entering Andover Theological Seminary in the fall of 1859. He was not an active abolitionist and begrudgingly accepted, in November 1862, General Grant's order to take charge of fugitive slaves within the lines of the 13th Corp. By the war's end, Eaton rose in command to issue orders and receive reports of a regular department complete with subordinate officers from his headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee. Among the responsibilities of issuing food and clothing, Eaton's unit developed hospitals and "home" Colonies where the blacks worked the abandoned plantations, including Jefferson Davis' family home at Davis Bend, Mississippi. Freedmen were contracted by officers to work on lands leased by the government to private individuals.

Eaton's skillset was noteworthy with General Howard who pegged him as deputy among the commissioners at the Freedmen's Bureau. Frustrated from his extensive work with the freedmen by the summer of 1865, Eaton side-stepped the power struggles that sullied the careers of Bureau staff and served as an assistant commissioner on a temporary basis. He

tellingly remarked to the corresponding secretary of the American Missionary Association, "others are fresh and anxious for the race."[14]

The AMA's District mission was authorized by the Bureau. Soon after he was appointed Commissioner of the District of Columbia for the Freedmen's Bureau in 1865, John Eaton canvassed the city and wrote Whipple to let him know what was possible in educating the deluge of freedmen who had sought refuge all over the city by 1862.[15] In 1863 military officials relieved the overcrowding in the camps and established camps at Mason's Island on the Potomac, Freedmen's Village in Arlington, Virginia, and at other Virginian locations. About eleven thousand people passed through these camps and the District's total black population increased from 12,929 in 1860 to 38,663 in 1867 – from 21 percent of the total population to 44 percent.[16] By late 1864 as many as fifty thousand refugees had moved within the line of forts that surrounded the city. During the school year which followed, the AMA taught over 782 pupils or almost 40 percent of the city's already established evening school population. Between 1865 and 1870, the AMA made a total of about teacher assignments and different locations around the city. More than percent of these assignments involved the largest wards, which ranged in size from 6000 in ward 7 to 17,000 in ward 8 but represented only 15 percent of the total black population in the District.

The collaboration between the AMA and the Freedmen's Bureau fit the objectives of

[14]Everly, "Freedmen's Bureau," 20-21; John Eaton to George Whipple, June 12, 1865 (16384), AMAA.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Harrold, *Subversives*, 225-226.

establishing successful missions. However, within the crucible of providing relief to the freedmen, society rules, government regulations, and sacred-secular relationships were extra measures that stymied some AMA workers. For example, the northern societies consequently relegated female teachers to an inferior position within the bureaucracy by paying them lower salaries than men and by denying them in the administrative authority. But the missionary-bureaucrats soon discovered they could not systematize the women's evangelical fervor. The teachers took seriously their professional duties and some of them offered explicit challenges to their superiors over a range of issues. Within the context of benevolent enterprise, these classes highlighted the tension between male and female, administrator and teacher, superior and subordinate.

The work in the District of Columbia represented a small portion of the AMA's national freedmen's educational effort. The AMA rapidly expanded its educational work after the war. In mid-1865 it had 250 teachers and missionaries in the field. The number increased to 353 in 1866, to 451 in 1867, and to 532 in 1868. In June 1867 the Association was teaching 38,719 students in day and night classes and 18,010 in Sabbath schools. It had teachers in every southern and border state, but it concentrated its efforts on certain areas. Because of proximity most societies had many teachers in Virginia, but the AMA virtually dominated benevolent activity in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana and the District of Columbia. In 1867 northern benevolence sustained eighty-four schools in Georgia, seventy-six of which were established by the AMA.[17]

[17] Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction*, 37.

The Freemen's Bureau superintendents of education, John Kimball, 1865-1869, Maj. D.G. Swain, 1869, Maj. W.L. VanDerlip, 1869-1870 assumed responsibility for overseeing all black schools in the city. General Howard made explicit this objective in August 1865: he declared that the Bureau did not plan to "supersede the benevolent agencies in the work, but systematize and facilitate their operations." The District of Columbia office spent as much as $40,000 annually in one Freedmen's education, and, between 1867-1870, it constructed and repaired schools, rented property for educational purposes, and transported teachers.[18]

But the goal of a complete system remained illusory. Like Yankee northern society officials, all three bureau superintendent's discovered they had far too much work to do and too little money with which to do it. The mountain of statistical reports and official correspondence produced by these men and their tiny staffs over the brief five-year period testify both to their bureaucratic expertise and the hopelessness of their tasks. The Freedmen's Bureau educational archives contain no descriptions of classrooms or children; they consist of vouchers, receipts, request for money, mostly report forms, circulars, and compilations of statistics.[19]

The willingness and even eagerness with which AMA officials cooperated with District bureau superintendents accounted for many of the AMA's achievements in the field of Freedmen's education. In Washington, the distinctions between sacred and secular efforts were

[18] Description of Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105. Records of the Superintendent of Education for the District of Columbia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865 – 1872, Microfilm Publication M1056, 1-8.

[19] Ibid.

blurred. Eaton, a former military chaplain, and Kimball, a member of the United Methodist clergy, expressed full agreement with the evangelical goals of the association and cultivated close personal relationships with their leading officials. Kimball threw his support whole heartedly behind the AMA, even going as far as offering the organization land that his family wanted to sell in the Hampton Roads area. He constantly corresponded with the association's headquarters and informed them of specific localities that needed schools and teachers. Although other groups expressed some resentment over the AMA's prominent position in the city, they had nothing to lose and much to gain from a close and "cheerful" cooperation with the Bureau. The prime benefits of the relationship included money for school construction, discounts on transportation rates, and a variety of supplies, from books and papers to stoves and rations. In addition, the agency showed no hesitation in allowing denominational groups to use Bureau-built schools for religious purposes, on Sundays and during the week. So elated with the Bureau was Whipple of the evangelical stance, that he often took exception to compliment the leadership: "It is a mercy not lightly to be esteemed that Christian men are at the head of that Bureau. I take it as a token of good for the future of the freedmen."[20]

When he assumed office in the fall of 1865, Commissioner Eaton had in mind the orders of General Howard for Freedmen's education in D.C. He began his tour of duty by taking a survey of the schools to determine how many were already in operation. The AMA leadership in the District of Columbia was made at ease with the bureau's forecast of fortifying education

[20] George Whipple to John Eaton, June 4, 1865, Records of the Superintendent of Education for the District of Columbia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865 – 1872, National Archives, Microfilm Publication M1056 (Roll 10), Letters Received.

in the city and the kind and cordial manner with which Col. Eaton "entered into our cause with the best heart in the world". Eaton allotted time to meet William Tilden, Washington D.C.'s superintendent of the AMA mission, to review Camp Barker, pictures, bureau plans for particular neighborhoods, and talked to staff over dinner. There Eaton revealed the Bureau plan to leave the schools as is for the term and during the vacation, the bureau would take possession of property necessary for beginning in the fall with new facilities. Tilden made Eaton aware of the inefficiencies in possibly of relocating by transporting their building to another site as opposed to selling it and moving into a building for the government has no use. "I called Col. Eaton's attention to the fact that our building after having been removed and set up again would be worth not more than twice what the cost of removal and necessary repair would be and that it would be better for us to sell our building or provided some other building could be found and appropriated to our use." [21]

Tilden was forward thinking as he called the Colonel's attention to the Wisewell Barracks on 7th street quite near present location of the AMA schoolrooms. Although he preferred locals that were further into the city, many of them were occupied by several army units that were acting as the provost guard. As the tide of army units receded from the city, the probability of the organization acquiring other building was high. Tilden became adept at hunting for space to conduct the mission of the association. "We must be putting in our claims for some buildings right along this summer," he said, "and think we may do something by fall, not before. I have made some little changes and improvements so as to get along more

[21] W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, June 8, 1865 (16380), AMAA.

comfortably for the month to come." The Freedman's Bureau supported sixty-six schools in Washington and vicinity. One hundred and sixteen teachers, 5766 students: ten night schools with 353 scholars; 26 Sabbath Schools with 3003 students; 6 industrial schools and 432 individuals in them. The total for the area was 108 schools, 9554 scholars.[22]

Although he stated that he was initially pleased with the efficiency of the benevolent societies working in the District, Eaton believed the benevolent societies served a useful purpose in providing instruction for illiterate adults and children. He expressed confidence that the northern societies, just beginning to work in Washington, D.C. on a large-scale, would provide a higher quality of education and he hoped soon to inaugurate a plan of normal instruction" for the freedmen in order to render them educationally "independent." This state system of education would soon "demonstrate beyond all cavil, that they were capable of appreciating and properly using, the blessings vouchsafed of them by an all wise Providence in the inestimable boon of freedom."

In his support for a hierarchical schooling plan and in his belief that education would serve to "uplift" the Freedman, Eaton's passion for improving the condition of the freedmen closely resembled that of benevolent society officials. Yet the AMA soon discovered, that more bureaucratic matters consumed all the commissioner's time. For example, the AMA believed there would be enough property to house its burgeoning missions at the expense of the

[22] John Kimball to Assistant Commissioner of Freedmen's Bureau, May 1866, Records of the Superintendent of Education for the District of Columbia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865 – 1872, National Archives, Microfilm Publication M1056 (Roll 14, frs. 133-134).

Government. Whipple in his letter of introduction was under the impression that Congress would provide buildings and free schools for blacks of the District. However, the Bureau devoted most of its energy to matching northern teachers with its normal schools, appropriating money for salaries and school construction, tending to mundane issues such as confiscated land, rations, transportation, employment, labor disputes and the controversies surrounding these policies.[23]

By 1867 the bureau had exhausted all its funds for teachers' salaries, and within two years the money earmarked for transportation and supplies was gone.[24] Plans within the bureaucratic relationship were often stymied by routine federal practices. Transportation provided for teachers, and at times, freedmen, was no longer available from the North to the South according to General Orders. The AMA superintendent was at his wits end when the simple mechanics of coal bins were not placed in classrooms after repeated requests were made to the Bureau's superintendent of education. "Kimball seems strangely indisposed to do anything for us in the way of providing accommodations of any kind. He has refused every request I have presented for the last two months, except one for a few small chairs for primary school. I have asked repeatedly for a coal bin at the soldier's library to save the necessity of having a pile of coal and wood in one corner of the school room. But I cannot get Kimball to do it.[25]

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[23] Oliver O. Howard to George Whipple, November 29, 1865 (16577), AMAA.

[24] Many of the Bureau policies had put Howard on the defensive; see Howard's attempt to explain the Bureau's position on Confiscated Land, rations, and transportation.

[25] Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands to George Whipple, November 16, 1865 (16545), AMAA.

Despite the growing bureaucracy between the AMA and the Federal Government, freedmen continued to press into the schools. In many cases the enthusiasm of children and adults overwhelmed teachers because it was something they had never seen before that moment. Most of the superintendent's reports from around the city testified to the fact that large classrooms grew smaller under the crushing throng of those who equated the free acquisition of education with their freedom. The rising attendance was the cause for one superintendent to desperately call in for reinforcements. "The schools at the Hospital are increasing and I think I shall soon be obliged to start another department," warned William Tilden. "It will be perfectly safe for you to send another teacher here at once. The teachers are overworked at this point, and labors increasing. I think I will write to Mr. Hunt today to send more help. I suppose we must turn away scholars from the school at Judiciary [S]quare for want of room. But here, when there is plenty of room, I want help enough to take in all who come." Tilden was gratified "to know that the interests of their people in obtaining education does not abate even after the novelty of the thing is worn off. On the contrary their desire seems to grow stronger and stronger."[26]

The teachers on the front lines of the classrooms bore the brunt of the increasing freedmen's desire to be educated. Often exasperation, some teachers plainly had very little time to complete reports and address many of the questions presented to them from administrators. Missionary's on occasion asked to be excused for the shakiness of their writing

[26] W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, January 31, 1865 (16720), AMAA.

due to how busy they were at the time of writing. Another teacher had little time to prepare a report because her attempt to induce "colored families to send their children to the day and Sabbath School and also to come themselves to our evening school and we also [have] been involved in making ready our quarters and school rooms which we have found to be no small undertaking."[27]

Based on the teachers' reports, the superintendent's report included their identity, the school and its location along with the period of assessment and the name of the teacher. The assessment was divided among scholars, studies, and expenditures. The number of scholars and average attendance of adult men and women with reference to if they were white or not. Within the studies, administrators wanted to know if the class were primary, intermediate, or advanced. Lines for expenditures were divided among the board and aid. In addition to understanding if additional aid was provided by the government or colored people, there were options designated for mission family, private quarters, or if one resided alone along with the cost per week. Ultimately, the AMA headquarters and Freedmen's Bureau wanted to know the average cost per scholar, type of school accommodations, how many visits had the superintendents made to the schools, were there any marked defects in instruction or discipline and general progress and improvement?

The superintendent was expected to report anything that unfavorably affected the condition of the school: whether it is in the community circumstances, health, efficiency,

[27]Isaac Cross to George Whipple, October 18, 1866 (17066), AMAA; Mrs. W.S. Tilden to Hunt, October 31, 1865 (16527), AMAA.

deportment of the teacher, or other causes. In the case of the Capitol Hill school "the building where Miss Roberts and Miss Harvey teach is so low that it cannot be drained and the water settles badly under the floor. The teachers are both suffering from it. I am trying to have it improved," wrote Superintendent James Brand in March, 1867[28]

Teachers, missionaries, and local superintendents submitted, despite the workload, monthly reports with cheer. Most considered their feedback and findings to be essential to sustaining the organization. After D. B. Nichols had toured the jail and ate a dinner for eleven cents that was not as good as New York's Millard's restaurant, he hoped the AMA leadership would "designate some place[s] where I can do good writing so as to increase the contributions to the society so that your funds may not diminish by their undertaking but may rather increase." Ultimately, he left it to the AMA to "judge the propriety and utility" of his writings. They were not beyond occasional tardiness or tough in tone. Many apologized for not writing or being able to received letters sent.[29]

Schooling was not the only social endeavor the AMA was involved in the metropolitan area. In addition to manning the school on the same premises, the AMA managed the Soldier's Free Library at Judicial Square for the community. A District institution where "during the month of August the Library was extensively patronized, something over 800 books having

[28] George Collins to E.P. Smith, June 11, 1870 (18031), AMAA; James Brand to AMA, March 1867 (17260), AMAA

[29] Several AMA missionaries viewed writing reports as an honorable obligation. See J. T. Marsh to Whipple, September 28, 1866 (17047), AMAA; John Kimball to George Whipple, June 9, 1867 (17337), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, November 13, 1865 (16551), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, January 31, 1866 (16720), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to Whipple, February 3, 1866 (16744), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to George Whipple.

been withdrawn. Of which a little more than one half was by soldiers of the regular Army and in is having a good effect." There was a reform byproduct to the lending library: a large number [of soldiers] have become members of the Temperance organizations on account of the influences thrown around them which would not be were it not for this Library."[30] Members of the AMA cadre ministered to soldiers in camps and hospitals having prayer, handing out tracts and/or Bibles.[31] Begun when D.B. Nichols was most active in the city, the Association continued to work with the Freedmen's Bureau to coordinate transportation to Northern employment centers for freedmen and southern environs for missionaries and teachers.[32]

[30] Ibid.

[31]William Burgess to Jeremiah Mace, September 30, 1864 (16107), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, June 16 1865 (16389), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, September 10, 1865 (16461), AMAA. Laura Stebbins took pride in her ability to teach and her students' enthusiasm for learning at Fort Reno. Her students, mainly soldiers, made progress in reciting grammar, geography, arithmetic, reading and spelling. Beside the time spent during regular hours she also tutored them after hours in her quarters. Their great ambition was to read the scriptures hours at a time. She needed a "deeper work of grace…direct air from God to provide these primortal beings as I ought." Stebbins listened to Christian soldiers and witnessed men finding Christ on their sick beds. See Laurie W. Stebbins to Samuel Hunt, March 31, 1866 (16859), AMAA; Soon, her responsibilities coupled with the Washington heat were too much: "I am not well and doing as I could wish, my duties the past season - two schools and the cares of a household have with the heat, proved rather too much. You know I am "increase in years" and cannot bear the "heat and tending of the day" as I otherwise might." See Laurie W. Stebbins to Samuel Hunt, September 28, 1866 (17045), AMAA.

[32] On various occasions, the transportation policy of the Bureau helped carry missionaries to and from the field, but it eventually shifted and stymied AMA plans. See Oliver O. Howard to George Whipple, November 27, 1865 (16577), AMAA; War Department Circular to American Missionary Association, April 10, 1866(16886), AMAA; Oliver O. Howard to American Missionary Association, September 1, 1866 (17051), AMAA; E. Whittelsey to E.P. Smith, June 12, 1867 (17339), AMAA; Oliver O. Howard (Circular No. 22) to American Missionary Association, July 1, 1867 (17359), AMAA; Oliver O. Howard to George Whipple, July 19, 1867 (17379), AMAA; George McClelland to William E. Whiting, December 17, 1867 (17481), AMAA; W.D. Harris to E.P. Smith, December 31, 1867 (17491), AMAA; Oliver O. Howard to E.P. Smith, August 28, 1868 (17613), AMAA; J.W. Alvord to American Missionary Association, September 12, 1868 (17620), AMAA; E. Whittelsey to S.C. Logan, November 4, 1868 (17644), AMAA;

Furthermore, government transportation was used to deliver clothing collected in the North for the destitute freedmen.[33] School construction and delivery of supplies was an integral part of the AMA mission too.[34] One of the premier industrial schools in the District, the AMA maintained Lincoln Institute after most of its area teachers had left the city.[35] The association found workers for the Freedmen's Bureau schools.[36] Continually, members, affiliates and

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E. Whittelsey to George Whipple, February 27, 1869 (17758), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to William E. Whiting, November 10, 1865 (16545), AMAA; George McClellan to W.E. Whiting, August 30, 1867 (17411), AMAA.

[33]Jeremiah Mace to William E. Whiting, January 31, 1865 (16232), AMAA; Turner Torrey to E. P. Smith, January 15, 1868 (17497)), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, November 22, 1864 (16173)), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to George Whipple, September 10, 1865 (16461), AMAA; Miss Ann Frances Carter to Samuel Hunt, October 31, 1865 (16524), AMAA; Isaac Cross to George Whipple, January 18, 1866 (16701), AMAA; Susan Walker to William Whiting, January 27, 1866 (16711)), AMAA; Pitkin and Co. to George Whipple, November 17, 1865 (16548), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to Samuel Hunt, January 8, 1866 (16670), AMAA; Ann Frances Carter to Samuel Hunt, January 29, 1866 (16716), AMAA; Jeremiah Mace to William E. Whiting, January 31, 1865 (16232), AMAA; also see Chilton's Discussion of Josephine Griffing, Chilton, "City of Refuge," 309-313.

[34]W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, January 31, 1866 (16720), AMAA; John Marsh to George Whipple, October 18, 1866 (17065), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, February 3, 1866 (16744), AMAA; W.S. Tilden to George Whipple, February 19, 1866 (16776), AMAA; John Kimball to E.P. Smith, March 28, 1867 (17241), AMAA.

[35] A good picture of the Lincoln Industrial School can be gathered from reports of the superintendent and teachers. See George Whipple to E.P. Smith, October 22, 1869 (17887), AMAA; L.D. Johnson to George Whipple, November 20, 1865 (16564), AMAA; Ella Cole to E.P. Smith, April 13, 1869 (17796), AMAA; George Marden to E.P. Smith, May 12, 1869 (17814), AMAA; Ella Cole to E.P. Smith, May 19, 1869 (17817), AMAA; John Cole to E.P. Smith, February 3, 1869 (17745), AMAA; George Marden to AMA, February 1869 (17759), AMAA.

[36] Bureau officials repeatedly made requests for AMA workers to fill various teaching positions. See John Kimball to George Whipple, September 21, 1865 (16474), AMAA; John Kimball to E.P. Smith, April 18, 1867 (17279), AMAA; C.B. Boynton to George Whipple, April 19, 1867 (17280), AMAA; John Alvord to George Whipple, July 15, 1867

employees sought literature through the AMA (New York Printing), some asking for books with black figures to teach the freedmen in the Oswego/Pestalozzian Method.[37]Because of its relationship with Freedmen's Bureau officials, the AMA was given authority over southern property on which to found schools, colleges, and benevolent institutions.[38]

The freedmen's enthusiasm reflected the general moral about learning in parts of the city. At the end of the fifties over 42% of the free colored population was literate, and some 1100 Negro children were attending private schools. In an eastern section of town that was known as the "island," Arabella Jones, one-time servant in John Quincy Adams' household, operated a school for girls. Using coverage from the priest at St. Matthews, Jones hired white

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(17377), AMAA; John Kimball to C.H. Howard, October 14, 1867 (17434), AMAA; John Kimball to E.P. Smith, November 11, 1857 (17458), AMAA; John Kimball to George Whipple, November 26, 1867 (17462), AMAA; John Kimball to E. P. Smith, February 15, 1868 (17525), AMAA; John Kimball to E.P. Smith, September 7, 1868 (17615), AMAA.

[37] There was considerable interest in providing "sensitive" educational material for Native Americans and Blacks Agricultural books to be used for Native American and Black curriculum similar to the materials used in Ireland and Germany. Others recommended bound volumes of the *American Missionary*, Wilson Armistead's Tribute to the Negro; *Antislavery Magazine*; Goodel's *Democracy of Christianity* and Miscellaneous Writings on Slavery; William Jay Phelps Letters; Bible Servitude; E. Smith's *American Slave Code*; Goodel's *Slavery and Antislavery*; Goodel's *Clarkson and the Slave Trade*; Movement for the Enforcement of the Slave Trade, Frutris; Fugitive Slave Case; and Brisbane on Slavery. See John Alvord to William E. Whiting, October 28, 1867 (17448, 17449), AMAA; Joseph L. Smith to AMA, December 15, 1867 (17478), AMAA;

[38] Due its activity in the tidewater area, the AMA administration took on, or rather, were given the responsibility of incubating Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute after the Freedmen's Bureau began ceding land to the Association. See Henry M. Whittelsey to Samuel Chapman Armstrong, February 19, 1870 (17958), AMAA; Oliver O. Howard to Colonel O. Brown, March 1, 1866 (16252), AMAA; John Alvord to George Whipple, January 3, 1867 (17148), AMAA; John Alvord to George Whipple, January 3, 1867 (17148), AMAA; Oliver O. Howard to O. Brown, March 30, 1867 (17242), AMAA.

teachers to instruct the pupils at the St. Vincent de Paul Free Catholic Colored School. The population of John Cook's Union Seminary grew so rapidly that he further divided classes into male and female departments which studied composition, the scriptures, readings, "recitation," a manual of morals, and physiology, including the teeth, the respiratory organs, and perhaps a matter of special interest to his students - the skin.[39]

As the caliber of primary school increased so did the offering for "high schools in the area. Miss Myrtilla Miner's "high school" went much further. Educating colored girls to perform better than most white children, Miner was often accused teaching colored children beyond their station in life and warned the city that her activities might turn Washington into a negro educational center. She was a frail middle-age white woman from New York State who opened her school in 1851 with the backing of Friends, or Quakers, and such ardent abolitionist as Harriet Beecher Stowe. She taught many subjects and maintained an interracial school that had no match in the city. Her ill health and the pending forced her to close the school in 1861.[40]

The law which supported the education of blacks was enacted in May 1862. According to the law, Washington, Georgetown, and the county were to open public schools for black children. The schools would be sustained by terms of the law that stated 10% of the taxes on

[39] Green, *Secret City*, 50.

[40] Ibid, 65; Similarly, Whipple recalled an almost identical situation in New Orleans where the free [black] population was 1/15 of the whole. They paid 1/16 of the taxes. Thus their taxes only fell short 1/240 of that of their numbers. See George Whipple to American Missionary Association, August 10, 1864 (16055), AMAA.

Negro Property would be set aside to finance colored schools under the supervision of the board of trustees to be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. The colored schools were federalized and the money would come from local taxes. Congress figuring that property owned by black residents in Washington and Georgetown was extensive expected the arrangement to produce some $3,600 yearly which could support a primary school system. Neither city, however, kept separate records of white and colored taxpayers; officials estimated the amount owed to the trustees of colored schools. The respective sums were Washington $265 in 1862 and $410 in 1863, Georgetown nothing in 1862, $70.00 the next year.[41]

As the 58% illiteracy among free colored adults before the war climbed to an undetermined figure after the freeing of slaves and the influx of contrabands, the first black public-school was opened in March 1864 in the Ebenezer church, on second and C streets, south east. In a short time, nearly 800 colored adults and children were learning to read. In June 1864, a second public-school law bolstered the first law, but there was no impact on the number of colored adults and children in the public schools. In 1866, Congress attempted to legislate the Washington County public schools, amending the 1864 law with respect to the city of Washington and Georgetown. By 1867 the District of Columbia showed 52% of Negro adults unable to write.[42]

As black illiteracy increased with the black migration into the city the soundness of

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[41] Green, *Secret City*, 67; Rayford W Logan. *Howard University, The First Hundred Years, 1867-1967* (New York: New York Press, 1969) 17; Masur, *An Example for All the Land*, 78.
[42] Green, *Secret City*, 67; Logan, *Howard University*, 17.

offering higher education was questioned. The evidence did not support the tremendous effort that would make it possible. By 1866, numerous blacks had matriculate at liberal arts colleges. In January, 1866, some 100 men and women were teaching about 5600 colored children in it before day schools in the District of Columbia; there were over 2300 pupils and 25 Sabbath schools, and some 500 in the "eight or 10 self-supporting schools taught by colored teachers." Six months later, the Freedmen's Bureau reported 10,000 blacks were receiving some instruction. The special census of the district for 1867 showed a total of 10,246 black children between the ages of six and eighteen in school; of these 8401 were in the city of Washington. A more accurate picture may be seen in the features of average attendance in Washington Negro schools: 3071 and 232 pupils in public and private schools, respectively. In view of the inadequate transportation in the muddy, generally unpaved streets and sidewalks, this average attendance is not surprising. There were 49 teachers in the Washington public schools, a ratio of almost 50 students per teacher.[43]

During the war, Washington had few antebellum public schools for white students. Mandated by Congress to tax residence for the purpose of opening schools, the city governments of Washington and Georgetown raised revenue so slowly that the public schools were stigmatized as "pauper schools". Congress never contributed financially. According to an 1867 report, the city's antebellum public and private schools combined never serve more than

[43] Logan, *Howard University*, 11.

one-quarter of white school-age children.[44]

The end of the Civil War brought better tidings for the District's white school-aged children. Ever opposed to the education of black children, the city administration opened the first modern public school building, for white students only, on July 4, 1864. James Patterson, a Congressman from New Hampshire and a member of the House of Representatives' District of Columbia committee, gave the keynote address. In a cadence of a New England school reformer, Patterson marveled at the edifice and stated that opened schools were the agents of peace and upward mobility in a diverse nation. Free schools were "necessary in view of the mingling of races, ideas, and prejudices in our origin and growth, he claimed. "They allowed "heterogeneous and discordant elements" to be "fused into one, and the whole population pervaded and actuated by an intense spirit of nationality." [45]

Paterson idealistically waxed the northern outlook for public education among the largely southern crowd. In fact, Richard Wallach, the mayor of the city, did not endorse the same accommodations for African Americans as he did for the expansion of white public education. In 1864, Congress overturned its initial requirement that only taxes paid by blacks would be used toward black schools. Now, school tax money would be allocated to the white and "colored" schools systems according to the proportion of white and black school-age children in the capital. The new policy riled white taxpayers who paid more per capita in taxes

[44] Masur, *An Example for All the Land*, 78.

[45] Ibid, 78.

than black residents. Wallach avoided the Trustees of Colored Schools when it came to dispatching funds. The ire of local black leaders caused the Trustees of Colored Schools to file a lawsuit before Congress passed new legislation. Wallach, remaining inflexible, wrongly held the black population at a fraction of what it really was.[46]

The redemption of black education in the District arrived in 1867, when the District of Columbia Supreme Court demanded that the city government pay the colored schools the tax funds it owed and the interest accrued from fine and forfeitures during that period of avoidance. Before they received money from public coffers to help support their schools, the black community was subjected to census count that Congress commissioned in order to weigh Mayor Wallach's count which showed blacks at about 20% of the population. The new census revealed black children now made up 32% of the District school-age children (ages six to eighteen). Responsibility for the delay rested squarely on the shoulders of city fathers who, enabled by fear, ignorance, and hegemony, began to remit the funds, and the trustees of the black schools were finally able to purchase property on which to erect schoolhouses, hire additional teachers, and open new schools. [47]

The schools became a chief source of concern for black leaders. In 1868 a secretary of the interior appointed to blacks to the Board of Trustees of the Colored Schools, and the trustees engaged a superintendent. After the withdrawal of northern aide societies, the

[46] Ibid, 79.

[47] Ibid, 79.

progress of black education slowed. Classes for adults ceased and tardiness was usual as most black families had no way of telling time. Although by law three months schooling a year was compulsory for every child, by 1870 only a third of the black children of school age in the District of Columbia were attending any school; Washington, Georgetown, and the county together had only 66 classes for black children. Restricted budgets, adequate equipment, the opposition of white people to having black school houses built in their neighborhoods, and, still more discouraging, many uncooperative black parents, badly trained black teachers, and bored, undisciplined children were among the things the Superintendent and trustees had to contend with. The colored private schools taught little beyond the ABC's. Eventually, only at Howard University's "model school", operating under the benevolence of the AMA and conducted by a dedicated woman from Maine, Miss Sally Grant, could a colored only obtain a secondary school education at small costs.[48]

Early in 1869 Congress merged the white and colored school boards; Blacks who were skeptical of white influence asked President Johnson to veto it. Later, to the shock of many city residents, a group of white and black residents of Washington's fourth Ward requested a mix school in their neighborhood. Mayor Bowen, several aldermen, the superintendent of the white schools as a private citizen, and the colored school trustees approved. The recent congressional act that had stricken the word "white" from the district cities charters and laws might well apply to all local tax-supported institutions. While many awaited a formal decision

[48] Green, *Secret City*, 100.

regarding integration of the schools, Rev. J. Stella Martin, now Pastor of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church, chose to test public sentiment about race by sending his fair-skinned nine-year-old daughter to a white school. The principal admitted the child, and everything went smoothly until several other parents discovered the little girl's racial background and angrily withdrew their children. The corporation's attorney recommended waiting for Congress to authorize a unitary system. The superintendent of the white schools took the lead and ordered principals serving under him to admit no colored children, how ever light skin, until Congress had contacted new legislation. By 1870 three more black children attended white public schools.[49]

As anticipated, at the next congressional session Sen. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts introduced a bill to desegregate schools in both Washington and Georgetown. By a vote of eleven to eight, Washington's common council asked Congress to pass the measure quickly, but the effort to formalize the government for the District of Columbia in Congress deflected Sumner's proposal. In the meantime, dissension among the city council over Mayor Bowen's costly program and political integrity largely submerged the school issue. Ultimately, the campaign to integrate the schools of the two cities failed.

As the decade began to close, Congress ordered on July 28, 1868 the Commissioner of the Bureau to withdraw from the states in which it had operated by the following January. By early 1869, the Assistant Commissioners and their staff were withdrawn from the states and the District of Columbia. The superintendents of education and claims agents remained in the

[49] Ibid, 100 – 101.

bureau districts for the next year and a half to pursue its education work and to process claims. The AMA withdrew it teachers from the Washington field in 1867, but continued to support the Lincoln Industrial Mission until it was absorbed by the public school system in 1881. In the summer of 1870, Bureau superintendents of education were withdrawn from the states, and the headquarters staff was greatly reduced. From that time until Bureau was abolished by an act of Congress approved June 10, 1872, effective June 30, 1872, the Bureau's staff was greatly reduced.[50]

The AMA's mission to the masses in Washington, D.C. was very short when considering other domestic and foreign missionary work. By 1867 the work along with its Bureau the collaboration had been exhausted. From 1867 and beyond the formal closing of the Bureau, the AMA began to broaden it work by opening institutions of higher education, furthering its western missions, and retrenching into elementary education in the deep urban south. As the tenure of superintendents became shorter, more mundane, and fewer children enter the AMA sponsored schools in the District, the Bureau called for another year of vigorous work, but for the AMA, the field had definitely dried up and the end for comprehensive missions was in sight.

[50]Description of Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105. Records of the Field Offices of the District of Columbia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865 - 1870, Microfilm Publication M1906, 2.

Chapter 6
Housemates (of Democracy) for Life

In November 1866 (the record remains unclear whether it was the 17th or the 19th) over 30 members who were affiliated with the First Congregational Church and Society met in Northwest Washington in rented basement rooms of the Columbian College. The society convened to discuss the condition of the freedmen in the city as well as throughout the country and the duty of the church in alleviating some of the conditions that freedmen faced. Members of the society were former free soilers or had worked among the national activities of the American Missionary Association. The presiding Dr. Charles B. Boynton stressed the special responsibility of the nation and the clergy to recently emancipated freedmen. Rev. Benjamin F. Morris, a clerk in the Washington Post Office and the son of Senator Thomas A. Morris, enthusiastically described his experience at the Wayland Theological Seminary, a local Baptist seminary, which he had visited that day. After visiting the Wayland Seminary and witnessing the shaping of half dozen black men into Baptist preachers, Morris was so moved by the experience that he proposed the establishment of a theological school for freedmen in Washington. The enthusiasm behind the potential founding of a seminary caused some in the group to question "why not now?" in its establishment rather than waiting into the future.

The question of "why not now?" was pondered and the meeting adjourned only to later convene as a missionary meeting. The particulars of the meeting are important to the establishment of Howard University in 1867. However, two founders, D.B. Nichols and J.B.

Johnson, are germane to this study because they provide a hint at where AMA missionaries went after they exited the mission field of in the greater District of Columbia.[98]

The society's theological school movement was, in part, encouraged by the founding of institutions of higher education where missionary and benevolent societies used land to foster learning and leadership development among the freedmen. By 1867, there had been established or would soon be established dozens of schools throughout the South: Berea College (1855); Wilberforce University (1857); Lincoln Institute (1866); Fiske University, (1866); Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute(1868); Shaw University (1865); Rust University (1866); Storer College (1865); Morgan College (1867); Biddle Memorial Institute (1867); Atlanta University (1865); Morehouse (1867).[99]

The momentum for establishing a school in the District of Columbia began well before the closing of the Civil War. By the end of the 1850s some one thousand children in the city were attending private schools. At the same time, forty two percent the free colored population was literate. Yet, the influx of freed slaves and contrabands during the Civil War caused the fifty eight percent illiteracy rate to rise to an undetermined eight year figure.16 As a result, Congress enacted a law in May, 1862, requiring Washington and Georgetown to open public schools for colored children. With no white resident opposition, ten percent of the taxes on Negro Property was to be used to finance the schools and a board of trustees was appointed

[98] Rayford Logan, *Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867 – 1967* (New York: New York University Press, 1968), 12-15; Walter Dyson, ed., "The Founding of Howard University," in *Howard University Studies in History*, No. 1, (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, June 1921), 9.

[99] Logan, *Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867 – 1967,* 11; Dyson, ed., "The Founding of Howard University", 8.

by the secretary of the interior. In March, 1864, the first colored public-school was opened in the Ebenezer Church, located southeast of the capitol, at the Second and C streets, southeast. Soon, nearly 800 black adults and children were learning to read. A second law, enacted in June of 1864, reinforced the first law. However, it did not increase the number of black adults and children in the public schools. In the summer of 1866, Congress attempted to annex the public schools in the county of Washington, and the further adhere to the 1864 law with respect to the cities of Washington and Georgetown. The 1867 census of the District of Columbia showed fifty-two percent of black adults were unable to write.[100]

The question of establishing an institution of higher education was not about the numbers, but more so its practicality given the overwhelming numbers that sought freedom through education. In January, 1866, some 100 men and women were teaching about 5600 colored children in it before day schools in the District of Columbia; there were over 2300 pupils and 25 Sabbath schools, and some 500 in eight or ten independent schools taught by black teachers. Six months later, the Freedman's Bureau reported ten thousand black attendees were receiving some instruction. The special census of the District 1867 showed a total of 10,246 Negro children between the ages of six and 18 in school; of these 8401 were in the city of Washington. A more accurate picture may be seen in the features of average

[100] Logan, *Howard University*, 10.

attendance in Washington Negro schools: 3071 in 232 pupils in public and private schools, respectively. [101]

The city's infrastructure did not fully support lower levels of education. Inadequate transportation operated through muddy streets as sidewalks were generally unpaved. There were 49 teachers in the Washington public schools, a ratio of almost 50 students per teacher. Most of the teachers were poorly prepared, and the school facilities were not conducive to sustained steady.[102]

In addition to the American Missionary Association's work during the during the 1860s, there were immediate efforts around Howard University's founding that fostered a permanent system of education and moral training for the black population of the District of Columbia. The National Freedmen's Relief association opened three day school for colored children, which it followed with four other day schools in different parts of the city. There was growing need for night schools for adults who fled slavery and the first evening schools was opened in 1863 under the charge of a gentlemen who volunteered to teach gratuitously. Besides evening, Sabbath schools reached upwards of 175 scholars while Sunday schools maintained rolls of 50 to 100 pupils. The Soldier's Free Library was open to regular patrons and held Sunday school on every third Sunday of the month. Congress provided allotments of money to open the first school for colored children in May of 1864 in the Ebenezer Church, Capitol Hill. It claimed 100

[101] Logan, *Howard University*, 12.

[102] Logan, *Howard University*, 11.

students in the first week, two teachers, one being sustained by the New England Educational Commission of Boston.[103]

Visiting benevolent associations including the National Freedmen's Association of New York, the Pennsylvania Freedman's Relief Association, The Philadelphia Friends Freedmen's Association were a benefit to the freedmen also. In addition to schools, the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association capable of accommodating hundred pupils with fourteen teachers, a building, and an industrial school for teaching sewing. It also had a storehouse and kitchen for the purpose of dispensing clothing and food to the needy. The Philadelphia Friends Freedmen's planned to stay for a few years when it completed a large school edifice the with living rooms for twelve more teachers at a cost of six thousand dollars.[104]

With two teachers and one school each, the work of the Scotch Covenanters, African Civilization Society, and American Baptist Home Missionary Association was overshadowed by the work of the American Missionary Association. At its height, the Association established work day schools with two teachers, having their day and evening sessions over 1000 pupils. These make a total of 20 day schools and 44 teachers. At an average of 150 each date will accommodate the 3000 children between the ages of six and 17 which were the new era did in 1860; but it is believed that not more than 1/3 them are now accommodated. There are five evening schools besides those of the volunteer teachers association. In this enumeration the

[103] *Washington Chronicle*, November 12, 1864.

[104] Ibid.

school at Masons Island (now in Anacostia), Arlington and Geisboro are not included. The District of Columbia was certainly fertile ground for planting a school for freedmen.[105]

As early as January 23, 1867, Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts introduced a bill for the incorporation of "the Howard University." In the meetings leading to the bill's submission, the Board members changed the name on four occasions (between November 19, 1866 and March 2, 1867) as ideas of the school evolved. Deciding to found an enterprise with more potential than a missionary society, the group began with the Howard Theological Seminary as an institution that would provide for the education of colored men for the ministry. "The Howard Normal and Theological Institute for the Education of Teachers and Preachers" came when Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy suggested the inclusion of a normal school would be beneficial to congressional approval given the findings of a Special Report of the Commissioner of Education in 1868. The distinction between the remaining changes, "Howard University" to "the Howard University", was nuanced. While the premier was for the preparation of anyone who might contemplate any vocation or profession, the later was amended to include all races of men and embrace all departments of knowledge.[106]

At the meeting of the board January 29, Dr. Boynton had been prepared a memorandum from The charter of the University of Michigan open quote as the bases," explain it and "submitted sundry suggestions and once at the couple to Howard university." It would thus appear that this Michigan shorter may have had the most significant influence One the

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[105] Ibid.

[106] Logan, *Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867 – 1967*, 21.

terms of the charter of Howard university. At this same meeting the board appointed Boynton, how work, and Wilson to revise Wilson's bill and duly present it to Congress. [107]

The charter of incorporation stipulated a "University for the education of youth in the liberal Arts and sciences"; Section two named As trustees: Samuel C. Pomeroy, Charles B. Boynton , Oliver O. Howard, Burton C. Cook, Charles Howard, James B. Hutchinson, Henry A. Brewster, Benjamin F. Morris, Danforth B. Nichols, William G. Finney , Roswell H. Stevens, , E . M. Cushman, Hiram Barber, E. W. Robinson, W. F. Bascom, J. B. Johnson, and Silas B. Loomis. They were declared to be "the body politic and corporate, with perpetual succession in deed or in law." They and their successors were "competent" to receive and to convey for the use of "said college" any kind of estate, goods, chattels, or funds. They and their successors were further authorized to use the profits for income from these sources for the benefit of the "college." Section three authorized a majority of the "corporators" to designate, after six days notice, the time and place for their first meeting. At this meeting they might enact "by laws , not inconsistent with the laws of the United States, regulating the government of the corporation." Under section four, the government of the university was vested in a board of trustees of not fewer than thirteen members, who would be elected by the incorporators at the first meeting. This section further stipulated: "said board of trustees shall have perpetual succession in deed or law, and in there and shall be tested that how work here in before Granted to the corporation." The trustees were to elect a "president, a secretary and a

[107] U.S. Congress. House. *Special Report of the Commissioner of Education on the Condition and Improvement of Public Schools in the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1871), 247.

treasurer." The treasure was to give such bond as the board of trustees might direct. One provision, which caused considerable discussion, provided that the board "shall appoint the professors and tutors." The trustees were also empowered to appoint such officers, agents, and warrants for use as needed and at compensation fixed by the board. All meetings of the board could be called in any manner Prescribed by it; nine would constitute a quorum to do business, and a smaller number might adjourn from time to time.[108]

According to the bill, the "University" would consist of six departments including a normal, collegiate, theological, law, medicine, and agriculture. The government of the departments, subject to the control of the trustees, was the responsibility of the faculties of the respective departments, but was subject to the control of the trustees who had power to "regulate the course of instruction, prescribed, with the advice of the professors, being necessary textbooks, confer such degrees, a grant such diplomas, As are usually confer in granted and other universities. A professor or tutor could be removed from offices connected with the institution, when, in the trustee's judgment, if "the interest of the university shall require it." Under section eight, the board was to publish an annual report, "making an exhibit of the affairs of the university." A "misnomer" - the corporation by another name, should not prohibit the acceptance of any kind of donation, gift, grant, devise, or bequest to or from said corporation was outlined in section. Section ten , which put certain restrictions for the use of

[108] Ibid., 248.

the university's Funds in which stipulated that Congress should have the right to alter, amend, or repeal the act.[109]

The planning for "the Howard University" bill originated from an evangelical need to found an institution of the "higher grade" for training preachers and teachers among the four million recently emancipated slaves and a half million blacks who had been born free. "Such an Institution," said one of the founders, "was demanded by the necessities of the great educational movement which was inaugurated among the freed people at the close of the late war. When primary, secondary and grammar schools were being opened throughout the South, for the benefit of a class hitherto wholly deprived of educational advantages, it became evident that institutions of higher grade were needed for the training of teachers and ministers who were to labor in this field. It was with a view of supplying this need that Howard University was founded."[110]

Those in favor of the Howard legislation also argued that the "University's" model for coeducation was a perpetuation of the freedmen's aid societies' efforts to implant biracial cooperation in the exchange of education. Boynton stated, "With proper management and the blessing of the Lord [Howard University] may very soon become a principal institution. Like every other good thing it has its difficulties and perils, but if Christ has planted it, it will live."[111] Critics of the Howard legislation railed against educating former slaves, arguing newly freed

[109] *Congressional Globe, 39C, 2S, App., P. 1992.*

[110] Dwight O.W. Holmes, "Fifty Years of Howard University,"*The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Apr., 1918), 128-138, 131.

[111] Charles B. Boynton to George Whipple, April 19, 1867(17280), AMAA.

slaves should not be given the rights and privileges of citizens and that the Federal support of one race of people was unconstitutional. President Andrew Johnson was notorious for arguing against the full acceptance of freedmen. He vetoed the continuation of the Freedmen's Bureau Bill in 1865 because it propose to do proposed to do more for blacks than for whites. Congress adopted a less comprehensive law with a shorter enactment period. In 1866, Johnson also vetoed the first Civil Rights Act Which declared that blacks were citizens of the United States and, as such, were entitled to equal treatment before the law, any "statute to the contrary notwithstanding." In the bill's notes Johnson questioned the wisdom of making citizens of the four million slaves who had just gained their freedom. "Can it be supposed," he asked, "that they possess the prerequisites to entitle them to all the privileges and the qualities of citizens of the United States?" Congress overrode his veto on April 9, 1866. In the same year, he opposed in vain the adoption by Congress of the 14th Amendment, drafted to give constitutional sanction to the equality of blacks as citizens.[112]

While Congress deliberated the Amendment, which eventually received ratification in 1868, the bills for the establishment of Howard University and the "Great Reconstruction Act" were being debated in Congress. February 11th, 1867, the House was informed that the Senate had approved the amended Wilson bill and desired concurrence of the House. Nine days later, after acrimonious debate the text of the first "Great Reconstruction" Bill was agreed upon by both houses of Congress. According to the constitution, if Johnson did not return the bill within

[112] See Logan, *Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867 – 1967*, 23.

ten days (or unless Congress by adjournment prevented its return), the bill would become law. Hoping to sully the bill its approval by Congress before it expired on March 4, Johnson delayed sending his veto until March 2. In his veto message, he reasserted his vigorous support of States' Rights and his disdain for black citizenship. "[Blacks] have not asked for the privilege of voting;" said Johnson, "the vast majority of them have no idea what it means." Johnson wanted the Congress to exercise the part of Constitutional Law which declares that the Federal Government has no jurisdiction, authority, or power to regulate such subjects for the state. Unmoved by Johnson's protest, the House and Senate overrode his veto on the same day, March 2, that they received his message. [113]

Having been sent to the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia in January, the bill to incorporate "the Howard University", S. No. 529, was amended, passed, and forwarded to the House for concurrence on February 11. On March 1, Ivan C. Ingersoll motioned for the passage of Bill S. No. 529 after it was read twice. Another motion to read the bill for a third time was affirmed before the House passed the bill incorporating the Howard University in the District of Columbia. Ingersoll moved to reconsider (or table) the vote, but the vote to incorporate stood. On March 2, the day that Congress overrode Johnson's veto of the Reconstruction Act, the speaker of the House, Schuyler Colfax, assigned enrolled bills and joint resolutions which were signed by Benjamin F. Wade, the President's pro tempore of the

[113] Ibid.

Senate. One of the bills was S. No. 529. The bill was signed by Johnson on the same day, March 2.[114]

One month before the charter was granted by Congress, plans for opening the school were made. After standing on "the hill" and being deeply impressed by the overlook of the City of Washington - the Monument, the Capitol, the White House, and other public buildings, including miles of the Potomac, General Howard secure one hundred and fifty acres of the property on Seventh Street Road that was owned by John A. Smith, a farmer and former slaveholder. The property was situated in the area called Effingham and contained a house that was formerly used as a German dance hall. The Board of trustees immediately began normal school classes on that site in May and sold off lots of the property to recoup the $150,000 which it paid. [115]

Without a dollar in the treasury for this purpose, a debt of $150,000 was assumed by the committee. With ample grounds and financial support of the Freedman's Bureau, The trustees began in 1867 the erection of university facilities. By the autumn of 1870, the

[114] It appears to have been signed by them on March 3. The Senate recessed from March 2 to Sunday March 3. According to the Congressional Globe for the latter date, "the message from the president of the United States by Mr. Moore, his secretary, announced that the president has this day approved and signed the following bills and joint resolutions: a bill (S. No. 529) to incorporate the Howard University in the District of Columbia. The exact proceedings are reported in the Journal of the Senate of the United States of America during the second session of the 39th Congress. The journal states: "the president of the United States approved and signed on the second day the following acts," among which was "S. No. 529 Incorporating Howard University." See Logan, *Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867 – 1967*, 24, 285.

[115] Initially, John A. Smith would not sell any of the property to the trustees because he felt that the presence of a black school would devalue the surrounding property. Eventually, he acquiesced and sold three acres before selling the remaining acreage for $1000 dollars per acre. See Dyson, ed., "The Founding of Howard University", 12.

university had constructed a building, dormitory, and hospital. The product home of General Howard was also near completion in 1870.[116]

The university continued to grow as it acquired lots, acres, buildings, and city blocks. Streams and creeks which crossed the property had to trained, drained, and leveled. Some parts were to wooded others parts were planted with trees. Since the end of slavery, the farm had not been cultivated regularly. It was not even enclosed allowing cattle to roam beyond its boundaries.[117]

Most of what is now known as LeDroit Park was obtained by the University in March 16, 1870. Conveyed to John A. Cole, treasurer of the university and former Superintendent of the AMA schools in the District of Columbia, it was later transferred to the trustees of the school and recoded in the minutes of the board for October 4, 1870, reading as follows: "resolved, that made the offer by John A. Cole, of the so-called 'Miller Estate,' as a part they are held in trust by him for the education of indigent and needy students in Howard University, be accepted by the board of trustees, and that the board assume the trust imposed in the said deed." This plot

[116] In order to control streams of running water in 1838, the Office of the Army Corp. of Engineers of the War Department purchased middle portions of the Smith's land. This water was taped to the Capitol for drinking purposes. The University sold forty-three to the United States Government for reservoir purposes, for $107,223.30. The hospital grounds about 10 acres are still not knowing the property of the university. And 1882 in settlement of taxes amounting to about $23,000 and four other considerations one that the land before ever used as they are or were automatically back to University this pop was ceded to the United States government. When the erosion in the election of in the Freedman's Hospital on this site was contemplated, the question of the government being legally bound to use the site for ever as a park came up. To avoid any legal objection to the hospital, the property was redeeded to the university. The university immediately released it to the government in perpetuity for $1.00 a year with the understanding that the hospital is to be for ever open to the medical students of Howard University as the free clinic. See Dyson, ed., "The Founding of Howard University", 13.

[117] Ibid.

extended from about Fourth Street, NW, westward to Bohrer Street on Georgia Avenue, and from Florida Avenue to Elm Street. The Freedmen's Bureau paid $60,000 for the block on behalf of Howard University.[118]

Howard University became a beach head or bastion of former AMA missionaries at the fall of the organizations work in the District of Columbia. Nichols was the superintendent of Duff's Green, Camp Barker, Freedmen's Village, and Mason's Island before he vowed to avoid freedmen's affairs indefinitely. He was an integral part of the committee board on organization and he even suggested naming the University after General Howard based on the Commissioner's prominence in national affairs. He further suggested a broader scope in the name, as in "collegiate", rather than using seminary. Nichols began at Howard instructing men who were already preachers in Biblical Geography. He continued to serve on the Board and would eventually become the chief librarian. One of the highlights of Howard's history was that four white girls, two of whom were Nichols' daughters, were the first to attend the Normal School in August, 1867.[119]

Johnson, on the other hand, taught at Lincoln Hospital before it closed and subsequently became head teacher at Campbell Hospital under the charge of the AMA. He became the treasurer of the University and was a part of the "body politic and corporate, with perpetual

[118] Ibid., 13.

[119] Logan, *Howard University*, 34.

succession in deed or in law." They and their successors were "competent" to receive and convey for the use of "said college" any kind of estate, goods, chattels or funds.[120]

AMA administrators and teachers worked among the leadership of the University. Edward P. Smith served on the Board in 1873 and eventually became President in 1875 and 1877. After rocky terms with the Association and the Freedmen's savings and Trust Company which eventually collapsed, William J. Wilson taught in a community based school authorized by Howard University and run out of First Congregational Church. From 1869 to 1874, Wilson taught arithmetic, grammar, penmanship, bookkeeping, and "simple law". His trusteeship lasted from 1868 to 1879.[121]

The year after the Theological Department was organized, the AMA called John Bunyan Reeve from Philadelphia to serve as Dean and Professor of Biblical Theology. He also taught Greek Grammar and Testament, Theological Encyclopedia, English Rhetoric and Etymology. Reeve attended New York Central College at McGrawville and Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He was given a Doctor of Divinity Degree by Lincoln University in 1870.[122]

A testament to the educational continuity that the AMA sought to establish is the matriculation of Rose Ward Hart (Pinky) at Howard University. After all of the drama diminished and the collection was tallied, Henry Ward Beecher collected two thousand dollars

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[120] Ibid., 20.

[121] Logan, *Howard University*, 65; DeBoer, *His Truth is Marching On*, 354-355.

[122] DeBoer, *His Truth is Marching On*, 154-157.

for Rose's freedom. The slave master only wanted nine hundred. Beecher sent the difference to Howard so that Rose would be educated in an institution of high learning.

Rounding out the AMA's involvement with Howard University was its sponsorship of several Chinese students during this period. Through the contributions of the society Fung Affoo, Leoung Sing, and Choy Awah were able to attend and become very familiar with the mission of the University. "I have so much to do in my studies," wrote Hung Affoo, "I haven't much time to write, so that I answer you for so long a time. I hope you will excuse me for it... I was very glad that I stood very well in my examinations, and my progress in arithmetic has brought me up to the interest last part of it. Our teacher said we will take up the large one next term. The third reader we have been through with, the first Geography we have drawn most all the maps, but the spelling is harder for us. I think it will be easy after while."[123]

Most telling of the AMA's involvement in the administration of Howard University was the presidential election of 1875 that pitted George Whipple against his former housemate, John Mercer Langston. Whipple' s reputation preceded him as he was one of the many who helped General O.O. Howard through unwavering friendship and tactical support, situate the school on a hill in Northwest Washington, D.C. Howard was taken by Whipple's camaraderie that he was known to ebulliently praise him. "While I write with you," Howard wrote "in devout thanksgiving for the great blessings God has bestowed upon a poor people through your instrumentality, I cannot help feeling a little anxious with regard to the future." Howard felt so comfortable with Whipple that he was willing to admit his poverty in particular circumstances:

[123] Hung Affoo to Henry Cravath, June 22, 1070 (18185), AMAA.

"You know I am very poor. Can you Society afford to pay me one hundred dollars and expenses for my trip to Springfield?"[124]

John Mercer Langston had a storied past of accomplishment. Born on December 14, 1829 in Louisa County, Virginia, he was the youngest of four children born to Ralph Quarles, a white planter, and Quarles's manumitted slave, Lucy Langston. After the death of their parents in 1834, the Langston children were settled in Ohio. John Mercer began his studies in theology at Oberlin College in 1844, and received bachelor's and master's degrees. He later read law under Philemon Bliss, a judge from Elyria, Ohio, and passed the state bar examination in 1854. Langston established a successful law practice in Brownhelm, Ohio, and participated in local politics. His election as town clerk in 1855 made him the first African American elected by popular vote to a public office.[125]

Together with his brothers, Gideon Langston and Charles H. Langston, he made the family name synonymous with black abolitionism in Ohio. He participated in a variety of community activities, from organizing anti-slavery and reform societies to presiding at local and state black conventions. He was involved in the protests against state Black Laws, Black Codes, and worked with the Ohio branch of the Underground Railroad to assist escaping slaves. Langston's commitment to social reform included women's rights, temperance, and racial progress through self-reliance. He worked to improve black education in Ohio and supported

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[124] Oliver O. Howard to George Whipple, May 25, 1867 (17327), AMAA; Oliver O. Howard to George Whipple, October 5, 1865 (17628), AMAA.

[125]See Salzman, ed., *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*, 1575-1576. See also William Cheek and Aimee Lee Cheek, *John Mercer Langston and the Fight for Black Freedom, 1829-1865*, (Urbana, Illinois, 1989); Peter C. Ripley et. al. eds. *The Black Abolitionist Papers*, Volume 4: United States, 1847- 1858 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

the black press. His correspondence on current issues appeared frequently in *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, and he also contributed some articles to the *Anglo-African Magazine*.[126]

Langston became disheartened by the deterioration in American race relations in the early 1850s. He began advocating black separatism and emigration, but at the 1854 national emigration convention in Cleveland he surprised delegates with a vigorous defense of integration and an optimistic assessment of the prospects for racial progress and equality in the United States. In the late 1850s, Langston grew increasingly militant and predicted that the issue of slavery would lead to a national conflict. He was among several blacks who conspired with John Brown in the in the plan to incite a slave insurrection, but declined participate directly in the Harpers Ferry raid.[127]

During the Civil War, Langston directed his efforts to the Union cause. He worked as the chief recruiting agent in the western states helped fill the ranks of the Union Army's black regiments. Langston also encouraged the charity of the soldiers'-aid societies. The black national convention held in Syracuse, New York, selected him as president of the newly founded National Equal Rights League in 1864.[128]

Contemporaries describe Langston as an intelligent, persuasive orator with an "aristocratic style and democratic temperament." Given these qualities and an impressive career of public service, he established a national reputation. Beginning in 1867, he toured the

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid.

south as an inspector for the Freedman's Bureau. His message to southern blacks emphasized educational opportunity, political equality, and economic justice. He organized the law department at Howard University in 1868 and later became the university's acting president.[129]

Seemingly, Langston, with all of his accomplishments outside of the institution as well as his contribution to the community as head of the Law Department, Vice President, and Acting President, would have won the election. Even twenty students in the Law Department, dated 21, 1874, conveyed the hope that "Langston's color will not operate as an invidious bar to his election." But the competition was tough as the two ran against President Erastus M. Cravath of Fisk University, Professor George Atherton (a former president of the University of Illinois, and Frederick Douglass.[130]

After a series of questionable moves by Langston, including resigning from a board committee and the Board all together, the election was held. Langston received four votes, Douglass, one, and Whipple, who had received ten votes, was elected President of the University. Although the minutes do not indicate who voted for whom, the fact that Whipple rather than Langston was elected President, stirred debate and discussion around town. The election created one of the bitterest controversies of this time period. The acrimony of the

[129] Ibid.; In 1877, Langston received an appointment as the American consul general to Haiti. After returning to the United States in 1885, he became president of the Virginia Normal and Collegaite Institute. As the democratic regained control of Virginia, Langston faced a growing challenge to his civic and political leadership, but he remained in the state that he always had considered his home. In 1888, he ran as an independent in a bitterly contested campaign for the seat in the United States House of Representatives. The House adjudicated in Langston's favor in September 1890, and he held his seat until March 1891. Langston surveyed his distinguished public career in an autobiography, *From the Virginia Plantation to the Nation's Capitol* (1894).

[130] For details surrounding the circumstance of the Board Election see Logan, *One Hundred Years*, 73-81.

election weighed heavily on Whipple who soon resigned, leaving Langston to carry out his tenure as Acting President. [131]

The significance of Howard University's election of 1875 was that it epitomized the AMA's activities in the District of Columbia during Reconstruction. The circumstances were prime examples of New Englanders maintaining a rarefied hegemony over their subjects. Whipple and his supporters were presented with the potential of allowing the very person whom they had tutored in the ways and means of transforming utopian ideology of an evangelical and free labor society into a bureaucratic structure. Langston partook of a steady diet of Finneyite radicalism and reforms that were at the core of earlier abolitionism. He modernized such principles to fit societal reform of Reconstruction that emphasized individual celebration in the context of capitalist principles. Yet he was not worthy of leading Howard University, one of the evangelical capstones of the South. In this instance, Whipple failed to realize that he and Langston were housemates of democracy and that once hegemony was taught, hegemony needed to be shared.

Given the mission and scope of the original plan to descend into Washington, D.C. and proselytize among the freedmen while using education as the standard bearer for admission into American culture, the AMA's mission for change can be deemed a failure. The missionaries expected to tame former slaves from the countryside whose time was succinctly measured, but were presented with boundless options in the urban South during Reconstruction; there was an attempt to educate children who got out of their seats, walk around, and talk to each other

[131] Ibid., 76.

at will; teachers believe that their moralizing lessons had deeply sunk into the hearts and minds of their students only to find they were retuning home to women who were believed to poisoning them with unhealthy and demoralizing living conditions. Teachers deceived themselves about their contribution to the soundness of freedmen's preparation and preparedness.[132]

Overall, the AMA had only a measurable impact on the Washington, D.C. freedmen. They reached a tiny minority of the city's population each year. However, in the long run, the AMA did accomplish its goals – the effort to equip the freedmen with many of the characteristics they so cherished – a sense of independence, (scientific) inquiry – experiment, Individualism, upward mobility, white cultural pluralism, freedom of religion – separation of church and state. Missionaries who set out to educate and save souls while providing a plans which promoted social order through reliance on hierarchy, cultural homogeneity, stability, community, and institutionalized authority. Northerners wanted to overpower, eliminate, and control the southern market – preventing the spread of slavery and southern culture which they saw as antithetical to capitalism. Similarly, New England missionaries wanted to conquer the minds of former slaves and tutor them in the essentials of a free market enterprise. Perhaps the goal of creating "black puritans" was not far flung or unrealistic in the outlook of the New Englanders at the time. Assimilating black southerners in the urban south who would possess white New England minds could only be accomplished through schooling. Ultimately,

[132] Whether literally or figuratively, there was a general fear that black female contraband entering the city would "poison them". See Rachel Patten to Jocelyn, September 1862 (15905), AMAA.

as the migration and population of the masses abundantly grew, the uniqueness of the schooling experience mattered.

Constrained by limited resources, burgeoning bureaucracy, and the local politics of Reconstruction, the American Missionary Association faced an enormous challenge in its efforts to assist freedmen. Its relief efforts saved thousands in the urban city and attempted to assist freedmen in becoming self-sufficient, educated, productive citizens, and to provide skills with varying degrees of success to lessen the difficulties during the transition from slavery to freedom. The Association faced an enormous help in founding Howard University and other institutions of higher education throughout the South. It is hopeful that this dissertation has broadened the study of the American Missionary Association t policies, efforts to reconstruct the urban South, and contributions to Reconstruction Era.

Conclusion: "The Mere Imparting of Information Is Not Education"
The Meaning of Freedom

Missionary zeal in Washington, D.C. was at its height during the two decades following the opening of the Civil War. Religious organizations and their affiliates descended upon the city as its black population swelled from 10,983 in 1860 to 48,377 in 1880 – one of the largest urban black populations in the United States during that time. Ten years after the first missionaries of the American Missionary Association (AMA) began evangelizing in the District of Columbia, AMA teachers initiated the instruction of contraband, freedmen, and free blacks in the fundamentals of education. The mission was to retool and prepare blacks in their transition from slavery to freedom.

Given the numerous milestones in understanding missionary work (labor) in the rural south, little has been said about missionary activities in urban South by historians whose foci has been the deep south, aspects of missionary duties, and notable personnel. This study examined one missionary organization that significantly contributed to the urbanization of blacks in Washington, D.C. The AMA's work tremendously impacted the lives of free men and women in the city. Their work furthered the original mission of the organization and added to its historical legitimacy and legacy.

By chronicling the activities of the American Missionary Association in Washington D.C. during Reconstruction, this dissertation revealed the ways in which a benevolent association developed policies in order to help the emancipated in the transition from slavery to freedom. Without initial support from the United States government, this study examined the ways in

which the AMA established barracks, farms, hospitals, churches, and educated many thousands of migrants in area schools. Next, this study also explained the ways in which the delivery of education depended largely on the local and federal political climate in Washington D.C. and the way in which the federal authorities understood the connection between black people's literacy and the initiation of schooling.

By studying the educational activities of the AMA that developed during Reconstruction, this dissertation revealed how education greatly impacted the lives of former slaves. While historians of Reconstruction often emphasized the political opportunity and economic independence prevalent during this period, this dissertation moved beyond these well established narratives and focused on the conditions and environments in which freedpeople lived. By shedding light on the human reality of emancipation, drawing attention to the literacy crises that loomed for this population and the long-lasting effects of the crises on the very people the AMA was sent to aid. Moreover, this study highlighted the perspective that the AMA was fully aware of the literacy conditions of former slaves and accepted the calling to help despite the overwhelming needs of the people they were tasked with educating.

At the center of this study are more than five thousand American Missionary Association (AMA) digital frames of papers which provide a clear understanding of what took place during this critical period. From such papers, personnel, ideas, occurrences can be closely followed to reconfigure the organization's past. Additionally, records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands provided a more concise view of the AMA's effects on the black community of Washington. Combined with more traditional sources, those

materials have broadened the way to a better understanding of the nature of the black experience and the factors which shaped that urban experience in Washington, D.C. after the Civil War.

City missions were fraught with travails and triumphs for the majority of missionaries in Washington during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. They were called into an unfixable match where high rates of disease, death, destitution, crime, and irregular housing practices and patterns welcomed the city's newest and poorest inhabitants. The enormity of the challenge was so great that a few missions and mission workers folded shortly after arriving – leaving those who most needed to be rescued to fend for themselves. For most missionaries, the call to mission work had a deeper meaning that was displayed in the inner sanctum of the organization's relief - in their efforts to create a sense of normalcy in the lives of the freedmen and freemen with traditional institutions such as the schools, churches, and work. At the core of these efforts were attempts to eradicate poverty and to create a teaming middle class slated to become the backbone of the urban metropolis.

In reality, the inability of the AMA's mission work among the black community in Washington to make greater social, economic, and religious strides by the end of the Reconstruction Era, is tied to the uniqueness of Washington, D.C. and the organization; the shear size of the migration and nature of the city left an overwhelming void that was impossible to fulfill. Ultimately, it was those who were first responders that failed to provide comprehensive aid in the transition from slavery to freedom – to bring a permanent program that lifted blacks in Washington out of lower class bondage. The combination of staffing issues,

poor administration, high mindedness, burgeoning missionary field, and Republican influence did not allow the American Missionary Association to commit fully to lasting change among Washington, D.C.'s black population.

Although some AMA leaders remained committed to improving the conditions in the urban South, others viewed AMA intervention as a threat to the establishment of a free labor force. As a result, society officials in New York failed to provide missionaries on the ground with the necessary resources, finances, and personnel to adequately create an effective education system.

Through the historiography on the AMA, scholars concluded their studies by addressing one simple question: did the AMA assist freed slaves in the transition to freedom or was it a hindrance to black political and economic rights? Answering such a question unintentionally flattened the further discussion of the AMA's activities, and obscured the complexity and detail that shaped the relationship between the AMA and emancipated slaves in the postwar era. The objective of studying the AMA is not to evaluate whether this organization had a positive or negative influence on the freedpeople, but rather to examine the ways in which this rich body of evidence can enlighten our understanding about the larger themes of Reconstruction, economic rebuilding, political mobilization, and citizenship.

Furthermore, the operations of the AMA varied so dramatically not only between states but also within states and even within counties that answering such a question is nearly impossible. For example in Hampton, Virginia, members of the black community consistently criticized the AMA officers who worked in the schools claiming they were training freedmen to

return to the field. Based on reading these sources, one can easily argue that the AMA was absolutely a hindrance to freedpeople's campaign for education equality. Yet, in the same area, Mary S. Peake served as a teacher, and provided by all accounts excellent education to the freedpeople, including compliments from benevolent administrators. Some might say that the AMA failed to operationalize its plans; in fact, the AMA was an institution that included hundreds of individuals whose work cannot be measured by a historian's yardstick.

While this dissertation accused the AMA of failing to provide AMA missionaries with the ample manpower, finances, and resources to respond to the immediate creation of a traumatized influx, the objective was not to evaluate the AMA in terms of effectiveness, but rather to investigate the larger question of why the AMA chose to address the issues in the way that it did. As demonstrated in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, the AMA's reluctance to provide assistance to freedpeople resulted from the ways in which poverty, illiteracy, and destitution were reported and how these reports reflected racial ideology and nineteenth century understandings about labor, gender, and dependency.

Throughout the nineteenth-century and well into the twentieth century, in and beyond the South, the relationship between the reporting of poverty and the actual living conditions experienced by people remains a significant area of inquiry in which this dissertation contributed. In the early 1980s, the immigration and naturalization experts warned the federal government that immigration from Mexico was going to reach epic proportion and demanded federal intervention. Yet, George H.W. Bush and his administration continued to ignore claims made by policy wonks in this field. As reports of immigration received international attention

and rates of illegal immigration to the United States continued to increase, President George W. Bush could no longer ignore immigration and eventually declared it a national crisis in 1997.

Yet, the politics and polemics of declaring immigration a national crisis lasted throughout the 1990s. Within the early 2000s, as illegal immigration penetrated into the country, affecting cities across the South, local communities, the nation panicked due to fears of a possible increased terrorist attacks potentially perpetrated by illegal immigration. First reported in Texas, Americans worried that illegal immigration would soon make its way to other American cites. As Americans braced themselves for the coming of an invasion (watching morning news shows about how to check if someone is legal or illegal and looking for citizenship papers) – illegal immigration silently continued to disproportionately affect black people in the urban South.

This dissertation is also an illustration of the ways in which history repeats itself. In the past decade, there were heightened concerns surrounding illegal immigration and the silence of political leaders when California's healthcare system nearly collapsed due to the weight of illegal immigrants who were being treated by the system but were not paying anything for the services rendered. Much like, in 1867, migration devastated the lives of freedpeople in the urban South and AMA missionaries set off alarms warning AMA officials about the tremendous needs of newly freed slaves who were going to inundate the available resources of the nation given their newly acquired access to freedom and all of its trappings. The Association however, turned its attention to other matters including higher education, the opening of Mississippi, and resurgent missions among Native Americans. While opening the West materialized from the

South in 1866, full-scale migration never made it to the Pacific shores. But county officials and local immigration specialists, nevertheless, initiated a massive campaign to keep migratory impulses in check.

For newly freed slaves, citizenship was granted by the 14th Amendment; Citizenship requirements ramped up, efforts were made to move populations around the country. Migration, similar to immigration, reveals the significance of how social change is reported, and the extent to which the illegal immigration (citizenship) continues to be a result of social forces.

Citizenship disrupts power relations between missionaries and the missionized. In other words, for all the ink spent, both then and now, explaining the desperate need for citizenship, this dissertation struggled to provide a profile of the actual educational conditions of former slaves, as they themselves would have articulated it. The need for citizenship points to the dislocation experienced by thousands of former slaves as they made their way from plantation to cities, from refugee camps, to farms, and from south to north. Thus upon the exodus of missionaries and benevolent associations, those black citizens that made it to the "promised land" were left with nothin' but 'ligion.

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